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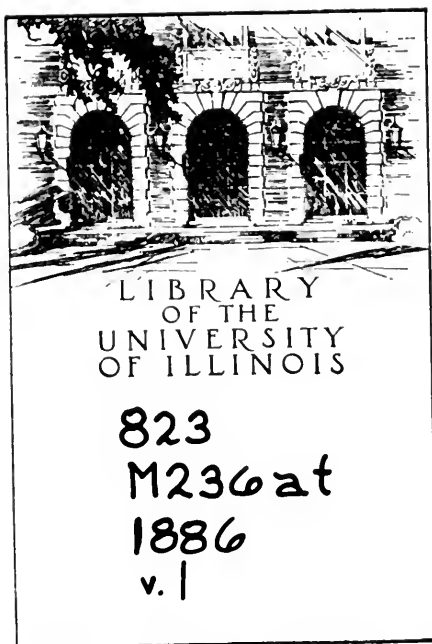
Katharine S. Macdonald



who folds a leafe downey: diuel roast browne  
who makes marke or blotte y: diuel roast hot  
who straleth thisse boke y: diuel shall cooke



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AT THE RED GLOVE.

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# AT THE RED GLOVE.

A Novel.

BY

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID,

AUTHOR OF "PATTY," "LOUISA," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

WARD AND DOWNEY,

12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

1886.

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PHOEBE. " Good shepherd, tell this youth  
What 'tis to love.

SILVIUS. It is to be all made of sighs and tears ;  
It is to be all made of faith and service ;  
It is to be all made of fantasy.  
All made of passion and all made of wishes ;  
All adoration, duty and observance ;  
All humbleness. all patience and impatience ;  
All purity, all trial."

SHAKESPEARE.

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TO

HENRY IRVING.

A TOKEN OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS GENIUS, AND FOR THE  
GREAT SERVICE HE HAS RENDERED TO THE STAGE.

*Ginner Ray 3096, 52 Check 44 v 3v, 1886*



## TO MY READERS.

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I HAVE been told that it will be of some interest if I say a word or two about the development of "AT THE RED GLOVE." Its germ appeared under another name, some years ago, in a story of a few pages, in *Temple Bar*. This little sketch met with considerable praise from the critics for its "dramatic treatment."

Keeping this in mind, a few years after I turned it into a little comedy, which was several times privately acted. After another lapse of time I enlarged my original sketch in *Temple Bar* for *Harper's Magazine*, in

which the story appeared in the first half of this year. I can only hope that "AT THE RED GLOVE" will be as kindly received here, in its present form, as it has been on the other side of the Atlantic.

K. S. M.

STANLEY PLACE, CHELSEA.

*November, 1885.*



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# AT THE RED GLOVE.

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## Prologue.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### BESIDE A FOUNTAIN.

IT is noonday in June in one of the old towns of Southern France. A girl stands beside a fountain in the middle of a grass-grown square. She is tall, and although her shabby old clothes are badly made they reveal a beautiful figure; her face and head are hidden by the bright orange kerchief that shields her from the scorching sunshine; as she places her tall brown pitcher beneath the spout of the fountain, her movements are full of languid grace.

“Mon Dieu !” she says impatiently, “the heat is insupportable, it stifles me.”

The square is indeed like an oven ; she leans against the fountain and closes her eyes ; its very stones smell as if they were baking, the *persiennes* of the houses that border it are all closed, and there is not a sound or a movement, not so much as a cat stirring. Surely every one is asleep !

No ! behind one pair of green barred shutters two small keen eyes greedily note the perfection of the girl’s figure and the indolent grace with which she leans against the old fountain. The owner of the eyes thinks she must have fallen asleep, she is so still.

Her orange kerchief casts so deep a shadow that the concealed observer cannot make out her face, but he feels sure it matches her figure. At last she slowly rouses, and he watches her lift the

brimming pitcher away from the slender silver thread of water she had set flowing; he sees that she rebels against her task, for as the heavy pitcher strains her wrists she stamps impatiently on the burning pebbles, and tilts the pitcher so that a third of the water flows away.

The unseen gazer smiles; the action has told him something about this fair creature; he knows well how scarce water is in the old southern town, and he stands watching intently till the girl places the pitcher on her head and moves slowly out of sight.

The big, full-fed-looking man who has watched her rubs his hands slowly together; his small eyes are twinkling with satisfaction. He turns away from the window of the eating-room, where the flies buzz noisily in the pane, and rings for the waiter.

That worthy is fast asleep, his napkin over his head to keep the flies away, but the sharp tinkle of the bell rouses him from his nap. He whisks the napkin from his ugly face, and in a moment he stands blinking and obsequiously bowing before Monsieur Carouge.

“You are noted in Abeyron here for beauty among your women,” he says, “is it not so?”

“Ma foi, monsieur,” the waiter shrugs his shoulders, “this is the first time I have been made aware of the circumstance.”

“You do not use your eyes, my lad; a girl was here just now filling her pitcher from the fountain. I did not see her face, but her figure is admirable. I have no doubt there are many like her in the town.”

The waiter grins.



“There are many girls in Abeyron—ah yes, without doubt monsieur is right, there are plenty of girls—and there are many also who come to our fountain, the fountain of the ‘White Swan,’ monsieur, to fill their pitchers; but,” here he flicks his napkin and throws it again on his shoulder, “monsieur must excuse my ignorance, I do not call to mind much difference among them as they stand laughing and chatting together.”

Monsieur utters a small private imprecation, then he puts his hand in his pocket and pulls out a couple of francs.

“Look here,” he says, “sharpen your memory, my lad; it will possibly be to your advantage to do so. Who is the tall, well-formed girl that comes alone to the fountain at this time of day? She wears an orange-coloured handkerchief, and, judging by her manner, I

should say she has not always been obliged to carry her own pitcher to and from the fountain."

The waiter's eyes twinkle, but he turns them up and then down, as if he were still chasing his memory for an answer to his customer's question.

"There," growls Monsieur Carouge as he holds out a five-franc piece, "try if that will help you."

It is really extraordinary to see the rapidity with which the waiter's dirty brown hand grasps and pockets the coin. His manner changes as rapidly, and he bows almost to the ground, for although Abeyron is visited now and then by wealthy French and Swiss traders, it is quite out of the track of tourists, and gratuities are rare at the "White Swan."

"Can it be"—the waiter's greasy, clay-coloured face begins to show a gleam of

intelligence—"that monsieur has seen Mademoiselle Elvire——"

"Yes," says Monsieur Carouge, "I have no doubt that's her name—a tall, fine girl, I tell you," he adds, so impatiently that a grin comes again into the waiter's face.

"Yes, yes," he says, "it is no doubt Elvire, she lives with her mother here in Abeyron; and monsieur has guessed right when he said Elvire had not always carried her own pitcher to and from the fountain." He puts his head on one side, and looks admiringly at Carouge. An impatient movement, and a fiery glance, however, that is shot out of those small black eyes, make him hurry out his next words. "She lived in plenty once, monsieur, for she is well-born, her father was noble—Marquis or Count, *ma foi*," he shrugs his shoulders, "I forget which, but I think—yes, monsieur, he was Mar-

quis de——the title, however, escapes me. Well, monsieur," he whisks his napkin at the flies, "years ago, before Elvire was born, this gentleman came and took up his quarters in a large farmhouse in the environs. It has been said that he ruined himself by gambling, but no one knew. Well, monsieur, one day he was married at the village church to the farmer's daughter; they were also married at the Mairie. Oh, yes, monsieur, it was a regular marriage."

"Confound the marriage," Carouge says brutally, "is the father alive or dead?"

The waiter bows.

"Monsieur, he is dead; when Elvire was ten or eleven years old, her father took a fever, and in a few days they buried him. And when the girl was a few years older, the farmer had an apoplexy, and he died also; and then the

truth came out, he was no better than a beggar. He had been raising money on his farm and his stock till he owed more than the sale of the whole would repay; and there was nothing left for the widow and her child but a very meagre sum that Monsieur le Marquis had designed for his daughter's education when she became twelve years old. It was, however, decided by the notary and the Maire that the widow must be allowed to keep it; it was all she had, and therefore Elvire could not go to school; her grandfather had refused to send her while he was alive, because he said he could not part from the girl, but people know now that he had no money to pay for teaching."

"How do they, then, live?"

"Well, monsieur, that fine girl you admire, and Madame Fontaine, must find it precious hard work to get along when

provisions are as dear as they are now, and sugar a franc and a half the kilo. Mon Dieu, many a beggar, who has not a roof to cover him, fares better than they do."

"Why do you call the woman Madame Fontaine? You said you could not remember the father's name."

"Pardon, monsieur, I cannot recall his real name. He called himself Monsieur Fontaine after he came to these parts, though I am told he signed his real name at the Mairie on his marriage."

Carouge sits thinking.

"Don't they try to earn a living?" he says.

"Pardon, monsieur. What will you? They have not been brought up to work, for the farmer kept servants till he died; and besides, they are proud, they will not mix with those who are poor like

themselves. I have been told that not long ago, a restaurant keeper from Marseilles—he is the brother of our landlady here,” he jerks his head towards the bureau—“well, monsieur, he was staying here, and he saw Elvire, as—as—monsieur has seen her. He wished at once to secure her as *demoiselle de comptoir*, and he made, through our madame, his sister, as monsieur remembers, a quite superb offer for the services of the girl, and he said, too, that he would find a home for the mother. Pouf!” he snaps his fingers. “They refuse, they are even indignant; and the mother has told our mistress that she has sworn to her husband Elvire shall never work for her living, shall never, indeed, do any servile work. Mon Dieu, monsieur,” he adds with a laugh, “the girl, I am told, keeps her mother to her promise.”

“I don’t know about that,” says Carouge, “I saw her drawing water at the fountain just now.”

The waiter gives a sly, sleepy smile; he is tired with telling Elvire’s story, and he longs to go back to his nap.

“Elvire will do that, oh yes, monsieur; it gives her what women love, a little change and the chance of being seen; indoors she is lazy. But her mother has said to me: ‘Elvire will not cook or clean, I do everything,’ and when I have answered: ‘You should make her help, madame,’ she says to me: ‘You do not understand, my good man, it is the good blood in my child, it cannot lie; she will marry a gentleman one of these days.’”

Here the waiter jerks his thumb in a contemptuous fashion, and Monsieur Carouge smiles.

“You interest me in these poor women.



As you seem to be acquainted with Madame Fontaine," he says, "you may tell her that a gentleman wishes to call on her this evening, on business matters."

The waiter looks knowing and inquisitive, but Monsieur Carouge turns his back on him and begins to light a fresh cigar.

## CHAPTER II.

### AT NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE.

WHEN dinner at the "White Swan" was over and the few other guests had departed, Jean the waiter approached Monsieur Carouge and told him with an air of mystery that Madame Fontaine would be pleased to see him.

Carouge waited to finish his cigar, and then having arranged his whiskers and moustache in the glass, he gave himself up to Jean's guidance.

They crossed the square and the principal street, and then after two or three turns entered a narrow, dirty lane, with an unsavoury gutter in the middle and old rickety-looking houses on either side.

Here Jean came to a stop.

“Monsieur,” he bowed, “I beg pardon, but I am wanted at the hotel; if monsieur will have the complaisance to remember that Madame Fontaine lives at No. 25 *au quatrième*. I have the honour to wish monsieur good evening.”

Carouge went on, looking carefully at the numbers, some of which were nearly obliterated on the decaying doors, and when he reached what he fancied must be No. 25, the door stood open, and he had to pull it forward, for he could not make out in the gloom of the passage what the number really was.

It was not dark when he had entered the street, but its narrowness and the height of the houses, and then the absence of a staircase window, made the entrance of No. 25 very dismal-looking.

“Pah!” Carouge said, and he put his

handkerchief to his nose, for the close air of the house disgusted him. "I have heard that choice flowers will bloom on dunghills; certainly my blossom may well wish to change her lodgings. Pah!"

He had to spit by the time he had climbed to the fourth landing of the unsavoury staircase.

He knocked against the wall without troubling himself to find the door. He heard footsteps, and then a door opened and a flicker of light showed itself.

"Will monsieur come in?" a voice said.

"Good evening, madame and made-moiselle," and he entered.

Carouge found himself in the poorest, most comfortless-looking room he had ever been in. A table, a few chairs, and some boxes were the sole furniture, besides a low bedstead which had not even hangings, in a far-off corner of the gaunt, dismal garret.

A glance, as he bowed on entering, showed him that Madame Fontaine had opened the door, and that she had a hungry, eager face, sharpened out of all beauty, though her dark eyes were still bright.

He looked for Elvire; she stood beside the table, apparently as indifferent to his presence as if she were some beautiful statue. Even when he bowed she only bent her head slightly.

Madame Fontaine was striking a match, and when she had lit a candle on the table, Carouge stood gazing in breathless admiration at Elvire. He saw a perfect oval face, glowing with rich colour; the girl's splendid dark eyes were half-shadowed by their long lashes, and her heavy eyebrows drew together in a slight frown as he continued to gaze at her; he saw, too, that her lovely lips had a disdainful pout on them. He forced himself to turn from her to

her mother. She had placed for him one of her wretched-looking chairs, and Carouge sat down on it, feeling as if it might give way under him and send him sprawling on the dirty floor. There was, too, something repulsive in the torn, greasy-looking cushion; but he sat down on it.

“Madame,” he said, “pardon my intrusion. My name is Carouge. In Paris, I had the great good fortune of knowing monsieur, your father; he was kind to me, and I should be glad of an opportunity of returning his kindness to me. I am now on my way to Paris; can I have the pleasure of executing any commission with which you may honour me?”

He gave a side-glance at Elvire, and was glad to see that she listened and that she had left off frowning.

The mother stared at him, and then she stretched out both hands.

“Ah, monsieur, you are kind. You who knew my father can tell me what he would feel to see us now, in the abject misery in which you find us; there are days, monsieur, I vow to God and the blessed Mary, when the child and I have scarcely bread enough to eat.”

The woman had not seated herself, she stood before him at a little distance swaying herself to and fro.

Something dark swept past Carouge, and then he saw that Elvire's shapely hands were grasping her mother's shoulders and forcing her into a chair.

“Do not, for pity, if not for shame,” he heard her whisper, and then the girl went back to her place and stood as much like a statue as ever. Carouge waited to see what would happen, although he already guessed that he should not find Madame Fontaine hard to deal with.

“Monsieur,” she whined, “you are kind ; but is it likely that such as we have money to spend in Paris ? Ah, monsieur, may you never know what it is to be poor——”

She stopped so suddenly that Carouge guessed some gesture of her daughter’s had checked her.

“Perhaps,” he said, “madame will permit me the honour of bringing her a keepsake from Paris, as monsieur her father would have done.”

Madame poured out her thanks vociferously ; but Carouge felt, without looking round at Elvire, that he had best make his visit as brief as possible.

He rose and made a low bow to Madame Fontaine.

“Then, madame, permit me to say *Au revoir*,” he said, and he took her hand and, shaking it, left something in her palm. “I will repeat my visit on my return



from Paris, with the permission of madame and of mademoiselle." He had turned round as he spoke and he bowed profoundly to Elvire, but though she bent slightly in return, she neither spoke nor smiled, and Carouge felt a little afraid of her.

"She looked like a disguised princess," he said to himself as he went down the filthy staircase. "Splendid creature! I must have her at any price."

When he reached the street he breathed more freely; even the unsavoury gutter was less sickening than the foul air of that stifling house.

"It's all right," he thought; "she is not angry with me, she is only mad that I should see her in such a hole and in such a gown—only fit for a rag-picker. We shall see how she looks in the gowns I shall buy in Paris. She will let her mother sell her only to get out of that disgusting house;

but the mother will ask a good price.”—He rubbed his fat, ringed fingers together as he went along.—“Elvire is worth any money.”

It was quite by chance that he had stopped in this old town, and he had originally had no intention of returning to it.

The sight of this girl had altered all his plans.

He hurried on to Paris next morning ; when he found that business would keep him there a fortnight he could hardly bear the delay. He bought dresses, bonnets, trinkets, lace, shawls, all that he thought likely to please Elvire ; and when at last he was able to return to the “ White Swan,” he sent the boxes containing his gifts to Madame Fontaine, with the compliments of Monsieur Carouge.

## CHAPTER III.

### TEMPTED.

ELVIRE had been to the fountain, and she had remained longer than usual. She had not forgiven her mother for exposing their misery to Monsieur Carouge. There had been a violent quarrel after his departure, and the girl had been ever since more sullen and silent than before. She felt very cross to-day as she toiled up the steep staircase with the pitcher of water, to her wretched home.

She turned the handle of the door and kicked it open with her foot. Then she stood still, stood with parted lips, staring

at the fairy spectacle that gleamed in the midst of those squalid surroundings. All the old boxes and chairs were placed in the centre of the room, and on these were lying the most beautiful things that the girl had ever seen. Seen! She had never even dreamed that anything could be so beautiful. Beside them her mother looked a beggar. Elvire set down her pitcher and came forward slowly, for she thought she must be dreaming.

“What do you say now, spoiled child?” Her mother had the accent of a peasant; she spoke quite differently from Elvire; her gestures even were quite unlike her daughter’s. “These are gifts from your grandfather’s friend, the kind, good Monsieur Carouge you have said such hard things about.”

Elvire had taken one of the bonnets in her hand; at this she let it fall.

“Mother,” she drew up her head, and stood looking very tall and proud, “I am ashamed of you ; put all those things back into their wrappings, and send them back to that hateful man. Oh !” she stamped her foot, “I hate him worse than ever. I was not happy, but I did not know what I wanted, I did not know there were such beautiful things ; and now,” she said passionately, “I shall long for them.” She turned away, and leaned her head against the wall.

Her mother stood looking at her.

She had found out long ago that it was easier to deceive her daughter than to soften her, so now she took an injured tone.

“What are you making this noise about ?” she said with a sneer. “Why may I not have luck sometimes ? These are my gifts, not yours ; you have only to read the address on the covers.”

Elvire hesitated. She began to look again at the treasures, and as she gazed and then touched the dainty, soft stuffs, and fingered the lace and the ribbons, she softened. There was nothing very valuable among them, but to her savage ignorance all these lovely things seemed priceless.

Madame Fontaine pushed forward a quiet gray gown, evidently meant for herself. "I will try it on," she said, "and you, too, can put on that white one, and if it fits you you shall have it."

She unfastened Elvire's gown as she spoke and quickly slipped the white one over her beautiful shoulders.

Madame Fontaine was ignorant, but her natural cunning helped her now. Carouge had sent a mirror among his gifts. She rapidly fastened up the graceful dress, and then placing the bonnet,

which Elvire had admired, on her coils of dark hair, she set the glass in front of the girl.

Elvire was usually self-contained; she had lived long enough with her father to notice his ways, and she had an unconscious contempt for her mother's lack of reserve—probably she had inherited this also from the dead marquis—but at the sight of the radiant creature in the mirror, whose nectarine-like skin contrasted so vividly with the pearly tints of her gown and the cloud-like lace near her face, she laughed out loud.

“Am I like that? Oh, mother, is that really me?”

She fixed her sparkling eyes, roused out of their sombre, downcast beauty, on Madame Fontaine's face.

“Yes, yes, you are like that,” the woman said; “have I not always told you, that if you had patience to wait

some rich gentleman would come and see your beauty and give you everything you wished for?"

The girl started and then stood thinking. Presently she said :

"But you told me," her voice had gone back to its discontented tone, "that it was to be some one young, and gay, and bright; your friend is old and ugly—he only stares at me, he does not talk to me."

Her mother patted her shoulder.

"For how short a time you saw him, child!"

Elvire shrank away.

"Be careful, mother, you may soil the lovely dress."

Madame Fontaine did not seem offended, she only wiped her hand on her old gown.

"He will talk to you when he comes again; a young man! bah! a young man would not be so generous. See here," she drew out a string of beads,



“you have not seen half his gifts; you must see them, or you will not thank him as you ought.”

Elvire stared at her. The smile had died out of her face, she began to frown heavily; she set the bonnet down on a chair, and unfastened her gown at the throat.

“Stop! do not take it off, child. Monsieur Carouge will be sure to pay us a visit, and I should like him to see how nice you look.”

Elvire’s answer was to tear off the gown, and to stand in her coarse under-skirt, her beautiful bosom heaving with passion, a bright flush on her face.

“I knew you were foolish,” she said angrily, “now I know you are wicked too; you forget that Jean gives me newspapers, and that I have read what happens to poor girls who take presents from rich gentlemen. You cannot think

that this man has given you these things, and that he expects nothing in return ! ”

But her mother was a match for her now. She looked shocked.

“ Ciel ! Child, how can you talk so ? He expects to marry you. Are you going to say No to him ? ”

Elvire still stared doggedly, but she was appeased ; she breathed more quietly, and presently she began to examine a small lace tie that her mother had spread out for her inspection.

A student of human nature would have been interested by this indication of Elvire’s natural taste ; she had never before handled any fine lace, and her mother would not have known whether it was good or bad, for although doubtless in the family of “ the marquis ” there had been hoards of these costly cobwebs, all had been swept away in the wreck

that overtook him before he made his appearance in Abeyron.

“Marriage is different,” she said at last ; “are you sure, mother, he wants to marry me ?”

Madame Fontaine in her heart was not scrupulous, she was keenly, hungrily anxious to make some profit out of Elvire’s remarkable beauty, but she was superstitious also : she had sworn to her husband that the girl should never work for her living. This rich man had appeared like a providence, and she was determined he should be her daughter’s husband. It seemed to her that a rich marriage was the only secure provision for Elvire. She wanted to be rid of her, and spend the rest of her days in idleness.

“You are not obedient, my child,” the woman said with a half-laugh ; “but if you do what I tell you, all will happen as you wish. Put that gown on again,

and sit down quietly while I fold up the rest of the things."

Monsieur Carouge came, and he was simply infatuated with Elvire's appearance : the girl was even more beautiful in daylight than he had believed her to be ; and a certain self-respect that came to her in her new attire took away the brooding cloud of discontent which had marred her expression. She received him graciously, and she smiled while he talked to her of all he had seen in Paris, but she did not thank him for his gifts, he had offered them to her mother, she said to herself, and she might thank him.

Madame Fontaine was busy at the other end of the room till her visitor rose to go. When he had taken leave she followed him out on to the dirty landing, and then, spite of remonstrances, down-stairs. There

was a somewhat prolonged conference, and when Carouge came out into the narrow street, he looked savage, and muttered hard words against Madame Fontaine until he reached the "White Swan."

At the end of a week Elvire left Abeyron as the wife of Monsieur Carouge. When it came to the point her mother cried at parting from her beautiful child, for she had promised Carouge that she would never seek out or even make inquiry for Elvire; certainly she was in return to be paid every month the sum of one hundred francs. There would be no more hunger, no more work in the life of Madame Fontaine.

She had gained her pension easily. Elvire was as indolent as she was by nature luxurious. She had craved ardently for ease and comfort, as well as for all that makes life beautiful, and though she

was only nineteen, she was already aware that money could give her what she wanted. To her half-savage, undeveloped nature, poverty meant all that was hard, hideous, and disgraceful, and she felt grateful to Monsieur Carouge.

When Carouge and his bride started for Berne he was a little troubled by the joy with which Elvire said good-bye to her mother and her squalid home. But he soon forgot this. He loitered on the way to give time for his commissions at Berne to be executed; and when he brought his beautiful wife to the dainty nest he had provided for her, a few miles out of Berne, the girl's delight in the fresh glitter of her surroundings charmed him. It seemed to Elvire that she had found all she wished for in these showily furnished rooms, where she could see herself reflected from head to foot in tall mirrors, and

lounge away the day on soft couches; or if she wished for air, there was a charming garden full of flowers to wander in.

But there was more than this; there was a steady, silent, middle-aged woman, half companion, half maid, to relieve her of every trouble, and Carouge constantly brought home some new present to his beautiful idol.

She was to him a lovely doll, who amused him by her fresh, pleasant talk, pleased him by her gratitude, and charmed his eyes by her beauty and the supple grace of her movements. He did not trouble himself about anything more.

He told her that he was the proprietor of a hotel in Berne, but this only interested her in connection with the dainty dishes and excellent wine he constantly brought home from this Hôtel Beauregard. For the present, Elvire seemed utterly in-

curious about the world beyond her garden; Carouge congratulated himself on having secured such a prize, and as weeks rolled by the peace and pleasure of his life seemed secure.

The truth was, that Elvire had already tired of his idolatry; but in spite of her selfishness she was grateful; she felt that she owed this new life entirely to her husband; and she resolved not to lose her position by her own fault. She felt that her quiet, self-controlled house-keeper watched her closely, and something warned her that Carouge would be very severe if she disobeyed him in the smallest matter. So she kept within the garden, which was large enough to afford her a good deal of exercise, and by nature she was too indolent to care for long walks.

Meantime, Madame Carouge was growing



every day, both in face and figure, more beautiful.

Twice her husband drove her into Berne, but he took care to choose a dull time of year for these visits, and after the second Elvire said Berne was a stupid, uninteresting place, and that she did not wish to be taken there again.

But all transition periods must come to an end. Her first ambitions were satisfied—she had become accustomed to be well fed, to be elegantly dressed; other desires began to germinate in Elvire, and their growth made her restless. Instead of lying for hours on her delicious sofa, she paced up and down with impatient steps. The room seemed to have become small and confined; she felt in it like some poor caged bird. She spent much of her time in the garden, peering through the bars of the iron gate, while she wondered what was happening in the world

outside, and stared curiously at the few passers-by. She was ashamed of her discontent, and she said nothing to her husband; but he soon remarked that she had lost her spirits. Her silence troubled him.

He questioned the duenna, for he could see that Elvire was not ill.

"She wants change," the woman said; "the sameness of the place mopes her. Take her away for a week or so."

Carouge shook his head.

"You are imbecile," he said. "How can I give her change? I cannot leave my business at this time of year. Why don't you get her some fancy needlework, something that will interest her? What is the use of you," he added savagely, "if you cannot keep a girl like that amused?"

The remedy was tried, but it failed. Elvire amused herself for an hour or two

in examining the work, and admiring the colours of the embroidery silks, but soon rolled it up again. "I do not like needle-work," she said, and she became more and more silent and absent.

One evening Carouge called out abruptly: "What ails you, child?"

Elvire fixed her dark, liquid eyes on his face, her cheeks glowed till he thought they looked like nectarines.

"Shall I tell you?" she said gravely.

"Yes, little one, tell me;" but he was startled by the new expression he met in her eyes, as she placed herself in front of him.

Elvire had already rehearsed this scene; she knew it must come, and she knew what she wanted to say, but now it had come it was not easy. She could hardly get her words out; but she saw that his foot beat impatiently up and down, while he waited.

At last abruptly, almost harshly, her words came: "I am tired of my life. I want to live in Berne—to see other people, to do as they do—every day is alike in this place."

An oath burst from Carouge, but the girl turned so pale that he saw he must control himself. He poured out some wine, and when he had drunk it he forced a smile.

"Why, my angel, do I not make you happy here?"

She looked at him gratefully, with tears in her eyes.

"I am not complaining of you, Jean. You have been very good to me, but you are not always here, and I am alone and dull all day. I"—she looked at him shyly—"I want to see other ladies; I want to see if I am like them. I can only read and write, I think ladies can do many other things."

“Diable! who has put this in your head? Ladies do many things best left undone,” he said harshly. “You are quite clever enough for me, my girl, and I like you as you are.” He drew her to him as he said this, but she struggled away from him and stood silent an instant, her eyes flashing, her bosom heaving, with roused passion.

“I belong to myself as well as to you,” she said at last. “I am not clever enough for myself, I know nothing. How can I know anything while I live cooped up like a slave?”

Carouge swore fiercely.

“A wife has only got to please her husband,” he answered doggedly; “it is my pleasure that you stay here. You must make yourself happy the best way you can.”

He expected she would burst out crying

and that he should pacify her by the promise of a new gown or a trinket, but to his surprise she turned away proudly and in silence, and went out of the room.

For a whole week she sulked and pouted in his presence, and cried passionately when she was alone; but Carouge remained obstinate. At the end of ten days his young wife had become pale and thin, and there was a desperate look in her eyes. He became more frightened than he cared to own, and he proposed a compromise. He told her she must continue to live at the villa in the same secluded way as before—this was necessary as a matter of business, he said—but an old professor should come out from Berne and teach her all she wanted to learn.

Elvire's gratitude was as vehement as her passion had been, and she delighted her husband by her renewed sweetness.

When the old professor came she received him kindly ; she took a liking to him, and for about two years she worked hard at the studies he marked out for her guidance.

The new occupation kept her from brooding. He brought her books and showed her how to use the books of history and travel, and some carefully chosen biographies.

Carouge had been firm on one point ; he had forbidden the professor to give his pupil any love-stories. It never occurred to him that such subjects will occasionally trespass into history, and that a woman may love an idea.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### A NEW LIFE.

ELVIRE proved wonderfully apt. She learned to speak and to write correctly; she took pleasure in the old-fashioned knowledge her master could teach; her spirits revived, and Carouge congratulated himself on his management.

But there was one great drawback he had not counted on, and this was fatal to the happiness produced in Elvire by this mental cultivation. Although love of books and of study had subdued her restlessness and had filled her mind with new thoughts,



it revealed to her that her husband was coarser and less congenial than she had thought him. He had no real sympathy with her studies, for he yawned when she spoke of them, and she soon felt it a hardship to be obliged to put away her books when he came home of an evening.

Carouge was not sensitive, but her indifference to his presence mortified him, and when the old professor died he openly rejoiced.

"I'll have no more teaching here," he said ; "there's been too much of it. You can teach yourself if you want to learn any more, but I think you know quite enough."

Elvire was very angry ; she flew into a passion with her husband, but this time Carouge remained obstinate.

"Then I will give up my studies," she said in the hope of making her husband provide her with another teacher ; but it

was a dangerous experiment. She soon lost her love of study and she went back to her indolent, do-nothing ways again.

“I wish I could sleep life away,” she said despairingly. The house was no longer in her eyes a daintily furnished nest, it had become a prison, and Carouge was her jailer.

Usually she was quiet with him, answering only when spoken to. Twice lately, however, she had shown her husband that she had a violent temper and a stubborn will.

He had brought the first outbreak on himself, by a rough remark on her silence. The man had had a worried day, and he had looked forward to a cheerful evening; he brought home a large bouquet of rarer flowers than those in the garden, and also a basket of fine peaches and figs.

When he offered his gifts Elvire thanked

him, and for a while she hung over her flowers with delight. In the evening, however, she was as silent as ever, and then Carouge told her, with a good deal of unnecessary bluster, that she was ungrateful.

“I no longer owe you any gratitude,” she said passionately; “you treat me worse than you would dare treat a servant. By what right do you shut me up here like a nun? Let me out, I will see the world!”

He answered her brutally; and for some days after that he stayed in Berne, in the hope that complete solitude would bring her to her senses. But when he next saw her, she was just as silent and indifferent, and although he had sworn to himself that he would never give her another chance of attacking him, his patience failed at last, and he burst into

a volley of reproaches as they sat at dinner together.

It was autumn; the light above her flashed on her glowing face, and on the fire that burned in her eyes, and in spite of his anger, Carouge thought she looked superb as she rose from table.

“I do not suit you,” she said, in such a harsh voice that he started, it was so unlike her own; “very well; you have tried me, and I have failed to suit you. I was weary enough before you began this persecution; I will not submit to it, Jean Carouge; I shall go back to my mother. With her, at least, I was free; here I am only a slave, a prisoner in a gilded cage, and when I ask for natural freedom, for the opportunity of seeing my fellow-creatures, you give me a harsh refusal. You think that gifts can soften tyranny. Never, never, Jean Carouge!

I belonged to humanity before I belonged to you, and I ask for my right, the right of every free-born woman."

This time Carouge did not swear, her tragic manner quieted him; he looked at her with puzzled eyes, for he knew that if the beautiful, vehement creature chose to run away, he might find it difficult to trace her. Something in her eyes told him that coercion, or any detected vigilance, would only hasten her flight.

When he was alone, he sat plunged in thought. His cunning suggested that there must be a reason for this change in his wife; at first he suspected that she had found a lover, but he knew that this was impossible without the connivance of the housekeeper, and she was always disposed to speak unfavourably of her mistress, whose reserve and haughty manner made the woman's life irksome.

Still he questioned her minutely, but he could find no ground for such a suspicion.

On his way back to Berne, it occurred to Carouge that he had been a fool to interfere with her studies; he had seen none of this violence and sulkiness while she took lessons of the old professor. Why had he not found her a new teacher? He had certainly reaped no advantage from leaving her to herself. He began to see that idleness did not agree with his wife's temper, for he considered the unpleasant change in Elvire mere temper, now that he had assured himself that he need not fear he had a rival.

He could not all at once replace the old professor, but he could try the effect of some new books, and he went into a bookseller's and purchased several volumes, having first specified to the shopman that

he wished for travels or history. He smiled as he told himself that he was not going to trust his wife with novels. He rarely indulged her with a newspaper, though she often asked for one.

But the books met with an indifferent reception; Elvire looked at them carelessly enough. "Thank you," she said, "they come too late; my taste for reading is over."

Fortunately for Carouge there came a spell of rainy weather, and one morning, after walking up and down the room for an hour, Elvire flung herself on a sofa and opened a book of travels. She soon became interested, and at the end of a few weeks, when she had read some of the other volumes, she asked her husband to bring her more books, and thanked him for the pleasure these had given.

He was delighted. She had become

gentler, and the sombre, clouded expression had left her eyes.

Carouge was wise enough to understand that this newly awakened taste must be encouraged if he wished to keep wild ideas out of his beautiful wife's head. He need not, however, have feared that Elvire would have attempted to run away. She had only threatened it in the violence of her indignation. Even when such a fancy suggested itself, a double motive checked it. She saw that it would be foolish to risk so much comfort and ease for a mere whim. Something warned her that her husband would never forgive such an act of disobedience. With all his fond worship Carouge had inspired her with a very restraining fear. If she did anything to make him cast her off she knew that she must either go back to her mother, to her shabby clothes and scanty food, or



she must work to earn her living, and this last idea was almost worse than the other. Also, to do her justice, she still felt grateful to her husband for his kindness and his constant gifts.

If Carouge had been a reader he would have stuck to his first idea in catering for his wife. Unluckily he had a great admiration for Englishwomen; he thought them simple and modest, the books they read could not surely hurt Elvire.

So one day he came home in a very gay mood.

“See, my angel,” he said, “I have brought you a present. When I was young, a good many years ago, these pretty gilded little books were left at the Beau-regard by an English Mees. My father told me to keep them till they were claimed; but they have never been asked for. I found them to-day in a box, so

there they are ; they are yours, my beauty."

Elvire admired the dainty little volumes ; she looked at their titles : "Paul et Virginie," "Mathilde," "Atala."

"Ah, what is this?"

She took up two tiny books in white vellum bindings : "Caroline de Lichfield."

"Thank you," she said. "I believe this is a story, and I have read few stories. I shall be sure to like this one, the outside is so pretty."

Carouge did not guess the poison to his peace that lay between those covers. As she read the little old-fashioned love-tale, a new sensation awakened in Elvire. What was this love, so tender, and yet so passionate—this strange power which produced in one character self-sacrifice, and in another self-love, and yet which seemed to be felt by all? She knew it

had never come to her. She was troubled, fevered, absorbed, but she could not take her eyes from the little dainty pages, over which hovered a faint perfume of heliotrope.

Carouge came home earlier than usual, but Elvire did not appear at the door in answer to his summons.

He hurried into the garden, and found she was lying on the grass absorbed in her book.

She started as he came up. Her face was flushed and excited; she stared at him with dreamy eyes.

Carouge burst out laughing.

“Have I roused you from sleep, my child? I’m afraid the book isn’t a lively one, if it sends you to sleep; let me see it.”

Elvire smiled, but she held the book fast.

"I like it," she said.

All through the evening Carouge was charmed by her gentle, pensive manner.

Next day, and the next, and the next, Elvire was full of sweet, languid melancholy; she looked more charming than ever, her husband thought.

On the fourth evening Carouge came home in boisterous spirits. The change in his wife was a great relief, and when dinner was over he began to tease her about her books. She had finished "Caroline" and was reading "Mathilde."

"They may be pretty to look at, child, but they don't make people merry." He chucked her under the chin.

She frowned, and pushed his hand away as if it stung her. "Merry, indeed!" she said, with such intense scorn that he looked up in surprise.

"What is the matter, little one?" he asked.

Elvire looked at him, then she burst into a passion of tears, and hurried out of the room.

Carouge was struck dumb; he felt at the end of his resources; but he thought seriously over the matter. He had known a good deal of women, but he had not met with a woman like Elvire, and he began to watch his wife. He saw that she was again becoming pale and languid, and he noticed too that she had lost her appetite.

Once more he consulted the house-keeper, but she only frowned and shook her head.

"It is worse than ever, nothing pleases madame now," she said. "She scarcely eats or drinks, monsieur, and she cries every day; monsieur does not like me to say so, but I think madame wants change."

Yes, Elvire wanted change, but not

the sort of change meant by her house-keeper. Carouge called in a doctor to see his wife; but when he had paid a long visit, he shook his head.

"Madame is not ill," he said, "she is low and nervous; the mind is not at rest. Give her change, and as much variety as you can."

Carouge felt angry and unbelieving. If Elvire was not ill, he considered that it was her duty to appear well and not to give way to nervous fancies.

"She could get over them, if she tried," he said angrily.

"I fear she cannot, unless she has some variety in her life. Good-day, monsieur."

Elvire became daily more languid, and she shrank from her husband more and more. She seemed to be afraid of him.

At last Carouge followed the doctor's advice; he took her to Thun and to

Interlaken, when these places were nearly empty of visitors. Elvire was pleased, she brightened up; for a week or so she was smiling and cheerful, and went into raptures about the snow mountains.

But she soon relapsed into her silent, abstracted state. There was, however, one new feature in it. Every now and then, without any conscious provocation on his part, Carouge met her eyes filled with passionate indignation; but when he asked how he had offended her, she refused to answer.

He tried to make her angry—one of the fits of passion of which he knew she was capable would have been a relief from her dreary indifference; but she was utterly indifferent.

So after a while Carouge grew tired of home life; his bower of bliss had changed its character, and he began to stay later and

later at the Beauregard ; he often drank so much wine, that on these occasions he found it advisable to sleep there.

So the months and the years slipped by. Elvire had as many books as she chose, and saw all she could of the world that walked out as far as her cottage.

But one day a decided change came—Carouge died.

The news was brought suddenly to Elvire, and she could scarcely conceal her joy. She was free—free from the husband she had grown to hate, and from the bondage which had become intolerable ! She had hated Carouge ever since she had longed to love ; she had loved, in fact, in his place, a dream-lover. She was free to go out into the world and seek for this ideal.

Before many hours went by, she learned



that she was rich as well as free. Carouge had no near relations, and he had bequeathed all he possessed to his wife.

“Ah! but after all I do not owe him much,” the beautiful woman said; “he has wasted my youth. I am eight-and-twenty, and I have not yet begun to live.”



Part I.—The Spider and the Fly.



## CHAPTER I.

MARIE.

“Hail, ye small, sweet courtesies of life, for smooth do ye make the road of it ; like grace and beauty which beget inclination to love at first sight. 'Tis ye who open the door, and let the stranger in.”—STERNE'S *Sentimental Journey*.

“TAKE your places ! take your places ! The train is just going to start.” Then, in a louder voice : “The train for Lausanne !” This on one side of the big station.

On the other side was heard, in yet harsher tones : “A stay of five minutes —Berne ! Berne !”

Out of this train, which had just arrived

from Lucerne, were pouring scores of travellers — English, American, German, and others — their arms full of rugs, and bags, and parcels. At first they did not hurry, but went about with their burdens in search of porters with whom to deposit them. But when the warning cry was heard from the other side, they hurried on, staggering under the weight of their varied impedimenta.

A tall official at the top of the steps at the end of the platform shouted out to them to make haste, and pointed to the train about to start for Lausanne, quite on the further side of the wide area; but greater haste was impossible for many of the travellers.

A tall, gray-haired man, encumbered with bags and sticks, limped along with a look of despair on his high-bred face.

A young, simply dressed girl was stand-

ing near him on the platform ; she saw his troubled face, and looked compassionate. Presently she caught sight of a porter with a truck, and she pounced upon him like a hawk.

“Do you not see?” she said eagerly ; “the gentleman is lame, and he will not be in time for the train to Lausanne. You are going across to the other train with those boxes ; can you not also take his luggage ?”

While she spoke, the Englishman had flung his load on the truck, and then, taking off his hat, he thanked the girl in bad French and asked if he could help her.

“No, thank you, sir,” she said, in a fresh young voice. “I stay at Berne.”

He bowed again, and went on.

The girl looked wistfully after him—his gentle face pleased her—then she gazed round the station. All was bustle and con-

fusion, as she turned to follow the stream of travellers going towards the way out. Here they had to run the gauntlet of a line of omnibus conductors, each bearing the name of his hotel on his cap; some were silent, only holding up their fingers, but others clamoured for passengers.

The other travellers were soon relieved of their burdens, but the young girl only hugged her bag more closely when an officious conductor tried to take it from her.

She was tall, and although young and fair, seemed far more capable of carrying a load than many of the pale, worried-looking English women she had seen starting on their second journey. She too was pale, but evidently this was a natural tint; there was no sign of ill-health or feebleness in her face. Indeed, her pale, clear skin matched well with the light brown hair that waved over



her forehead, and with the gray eyes below ; these eyes darkened and brightened, and a faint rosy colour showed itself, as the omnibus conductor again tried to take her bag from her.

“Give it me ; you must be going somewhere in the town,” he said. “Come with me. See ! I have plenty of room.” And he pointed to a little omnibus, the shabbiest in the row drawn up in front of the station.

The girl bit her lips. She felt confused, the noise and bustle had made her head spin, and she would gladly have taken shelter from it ; but she remembered the directions she had received. She pulled out a bit of folded paper from her glove, and held it for the man to read.

“Spitalgasse,” he said, “Madame Bobineau ; that’s the glove shop, ‘The Red Glove’—oh !” His interest vanished, and he turned away.

“You are close by, my girl,” he said, over his shoulder. “Go straight on ; you will see the shop under the arcade, a little way beyond the corner of the Place yonder ; a large red glove hangs over the door.”

“Please stop,” the girl said, in a frightened voice. “I was to ask some one—you, perhaps—if your omnibus goes past Madame Bobineau’s house.”

“Yes, yes—what then ? Make haste !” he said, but he was less surly now.

“Then I am to give you this”—she gave him her luggage ticket—“and I was to ask you to bring my box to Madame Bobineau’s, in the Spitalgasse.”

He shrugged his shoulders and grunted. The girl, without another look at him, darted out into the street, and then stopped, bewildered by the movement around her.

It was market-day in Berne, and besides the crowd of small vehicles, there were groups of peasant women in sober costume of black and white, varied by flower-crowned hats, and silver chains hanging from each shoulder of their bodices. Also it was the last week in July, and Berne was full of tourists, either just arrived or just departing in search of health and amusement.

Marie Peyrolles, fresh from her quiet convent home near Lake Lucerne, felt dazed rather than amused by the lively scene. She had no link of sympathy to connect her with the bustle in the street. The stalwart milk-carriers, bending under the weight of their wooden milk-cans, or walking beside the huge yellow dogs that drew their milk-barrows, had no word or message for her; these men nodded and joked with the women at the fruit-stalls beside the road; with the girls at the fountains;

or with others who had come in to market ; the comers in from the villages made little groups and told their bits of gossip or did their marketing as they went up the long crowded street toward the Clock Tower.

The sun shone hotly on the round stones of the street, and birds in their cages sang merrily among the flowers at the blind-shaded windows ; while here and there a cat sat blinking its eyes in the open doorway of a shop.

Marie did not see sorrow anywhere, but her heart was heavy ; she felt a forlorn stranger amid all this life and bustle, and she stood fairly scared when she reached the corner of the large Place, and looked up and down the four ways that met there.

“ Was it left or right I had to turn ? ” she asked herself ; and her eyes grew larger still with terror and sadness.

She had that morning said Good-bye to all she loved—the good sisters of St. Esprit, who had brought her up ever since she was a little girl—and now, before her tears were dry, she had lost her way in seeking her guardian's house. Marie tried hard not to prejudice herself against this guardian, her father's old cousin, Madame Bobineau. She knew that she had no claim on her, for the good sisters had said it was very kind and generous of her cousin to come forward and offer to provide for her. Marie had often felt a longing to see what the world was like beyond the little village near the convent; but this sudden launching into the bustle of town life chilled and frightened her—she thought Madame Bobineau would have met her at the station—and now she feared she might have lost her way. She stood still and tried

to keep back some fresh tears which were scalding her eyelids.

While she stood in this bewildered state she became aware that a short, stout, very upright man, with a round, whiskerless face, was staring hard at her. He seemed to have stopped for no other purpose. There he stood, his legs wide apart, his small black eyes and his mouth wide open, surveying her with steady complacency.

At first Marie frowned: she thought it was rude of him to stare at her so. Her second thought was that he looked good-natured, and would perhaps help her.

“If you please, sir,” she said, growing rosy, for she felt much shyer in speaking to this stranger than she had felt in helping the wearied Englishman, “can you tell me if I am near the Spitalgasse?”

The stout man had raised his hat at the first word; he bowed profoundly and

thereby showed the bald, shining top of his head. "I am at your service, mademoiselle," he said. "This is the Spital-gasse"—he pointed to the arcaded street on the left; then seeing the tears hanging on her eyelashes he divined some of her uneasiness. "Mademoiselle is perhaps a stranger; if mademoiselle will have the goodness to tell me where she is going, I will gladly show her the way."

He looked hard at her and pushed up the tuft of hair on his chin with a fat, stumpy finger.

But the nuns had bade Marie beware of strange men, and she remembered the direction the conductor had given her to find the glove shop.

"I thank you very much, monsieur," she said, shyly, "but I know my way now."

Her grateful glance completed her conquest over the stout man. He stood

looking after her, hat in hand, with his feet still set widely apart, as she tripped down the Spitalgasse.

“She is a dainty morsel,” he said to himself, “fresh as a bunch of flowers. I have never seen anything like her in Berne. My friend Loigerot,”—he patted his padded chest with his broad hand—“if you do not find out where this pretty bird is going to perch, you are not worthy to have been a captain in the Forty-fifth Regiment of the Emperor Napoleon the Third.”

He had put on his hat, but at the Emperor's name he uncovered again, and glanced at the decoration on his coat.

No one looking at him could mistake his profession or his country. One sees such middle-aged warriors by the dozen, in their blue frocks and sword-belts and red breeches, parading the streets of any



French garrison town; and although he had quitted the army, and wore plain clothes, Monsieur Loigerot had a way, as he walked, of putting his hand now and then to adjust the sword which no longer hung beside him. His broad, cheerful face looked serene and untroubled; no lines furrowed his brown forehead, though it must be owned that the hair had receded from it, and was even a little gray.

The captain had lately inherited some property — a little country house near Strasbourg and a bit of land had been left to him by an old relative, whose affairs would take some months to settle; and so, after thirty years of army life Captain Achille Loigerot had decided to give up soldiering and to settle down as a quiet citizen. In a few months' time he should come into possession of his property. He had always been happy as a soldier, and

he meant to be happy as a propriétaire, he also meant to marry; meantime he had come to Berne to look up an old acquaintance, one of the few he could lay claim to. His friend, Monsieur Carouge, kept a hotel in Berne, but on arriving in that city, Monsieur Loigerot found that Jacques Carouge, whom he had not seen for twenty years, was dead, and that his young widow was left hostess of the Hôtel Beauregard.

This very morning he had reminded Madame Carouge of the "Beauregard" that he wanted a wife: not too young, he said—a sensible, pleasant woman, who would manage his house with discretion, and make life agreeable.

The handsome widow had smiled and nodded.

"So," she said, "we are then going to lose the pleasant society of Monsieur le Capitaine. Believe me, monsieur, you

will find plenty of ladies willing to listen to your proposal."

The captain had felt a little troubled by this assertion ; he knew that he was neither young nor handsome, he was also conscious of his bald head and rotund figure, at least he always became aware of these personal defects in the presence of his beautiful hostess.

"Madame,"—he bowed so humbly and looked so much in earnest, that Madame Carouge felt impressed—"I am only a man and I may be easily deceived, will you do me the favour of aiding my choice? I—aw"—he had puffed out his words—"I shall esteem such a favour a lasting obligation. She must be quiet, madame, you understand, and amiable, and about—about thirty-five."

Then he had drawn a deep breath, and had looked much ashamed of his own boldness.

Just now the sight of this fair young country girl had scattered these sober visions; a much warmer sensation took possession of him. He did not follow Marie closely, but he determined to keep her in sight; and Monsieur Loigerot crossed over, went up the Spitalgasse on the other side of the way, knowing well that under the arcades, crowded as they were to-day, it would not be easy for the girl to see that he was following her.

Both sides of the street were so full that it cost him much vigilance not to lose sight of his prize, every shop window had its group of gazers, and in the street between was a double line of fruit and vegetable stalls, so that vehicles coming up or going down found it difficult to pass between the stalls.

All at once a horse turned restive, backed against a pile of plums and pears,

and sent the rich-hued fruit rolling over the stones. Captain Loigerot stood still, laughing heartily at the promptitude with which a score of urchins flung themselves on the spoil, while the owner, a shrivelled old woman, scolded and grumbled and chattered through her toothless gums, and frowned till the lines in her brown face looked inky, and her small eyes became like a pair of shining black beads. It was all over in a moment. The subdued horse was led off, the old woman's stall was righted, and Monsieur Loigerot looked across the street to see whether his country girl had also enjoyed the little scene.

She had vanished.

Opposite him was the Stork fountain, gray-green with age, and just behind this was the glover's shop, over which he lodged, its sign, a plump, huge, scarlet

glove hanging over the doorway. Beyond was a confectioner's, and its windows were extra gay to-day ; there was a brave show of delicate cakes, frosted with sugar or brown with chocolate, cream-tarts, and many-coloured fondants.

The captain crossed over and peered curiously in, for it seemed a likely place to tempt a young girl's appetite. The shop was empty, and Madame Webern herself stood behind her counter.

"She and the old Bobineau are dear friends," he said ; "they are always gossiping. I do not choose my landlady to hear that I have been looking after a girl ; it might make her less civil."

The captain little knew how near he was to the object of his search, when he forbore to question Madame Webern.

He went on, looking curiously into the shops, but at last he turned back

to resume his walk, which his meeting with Marie had interrupted. A twinkle came into his quiet eyes.

“It does not matter. I will keep a good look-out, and we shall meet again. After all, I do not think that Bobineau would trouble herself about me.” He gave a chuckle. “The old woman is blind to the ways of a first-floor lodger who pays his rent every week. That poor devil on the top storey, or even my tall friend the bank clerk, over my head, might find her more clear-sighted.”

He walked on smiling; his adventure had put him in rollicking spirits. Why should he not amuse himself before he settled down quietly into matrimony with the pleasant domestic wife he had asked Madame Carouge to find for him?

“Yes, yes,” he said to himself, “I will find that pretty little creature.”

## CHAPTER II.

### MADAME BOBINEAU.

“Yes, sir,” replied my son; “but travelling after fortune is not the way to secure her.”—*Vicar of Wakefield.*

MARIE PEYROLLES passed by the glove shop, and gave a timid knock on the house door beside it. She was too much agitated even to notice the plethoric-looking red glove that seemed to point either a warning or a welcoming finger towards her. Presently the door opened, but the passage was so dark that she could only see dimly.

“Come in,” a voice said, in the darkness.  
“Is it you, Marie Peyrolles?”



“Yes,” the girl answered; and then the door shut behind her, and she followed the short figure she began to make out in the dim light to the end of the narrow passage.

A door was opened on the left, and light streamed through.

Then Marie saw that she was following a small woman in a shabby gown of brown stuff into a shallow oblong room surrounded by shelves, on which stood paper boxes ranged closely one against another; on two sides these shelves reached the ceiling; at the back a small window intervened, and opposite this was a glass partition between the room and the shop. The panes of this partition were frosted, except those four which made the upper part of a door of communication; over these panes hung a green curtain, which at this moment was tucked

up on one side so as to command the entrance of the shop.

Marie's eyes had strayed from her conductor to take in these details. Now, looking down at her, she met the piercing gaze of two small, narrow dark eyes. It seemed as if some one had drawn the face belonging to these eyes on each side till it had taken a sort of Chinese expression, which the paucity of eyelashes increased; the face was certainly more broad than long, and the loss of teeth had brought the nose and chin nearer together than nature had originally meant them to be. The small woman's skin was thick and yellow, and looked older than her hair did; this was still brown, and was strained in flat braids into a little round knot behind her head, the knot being crowned by a black comb with five points, each surmounted by a large black

knob. She wore a black silk apron, and some folds of white muslin showed between her throat and the top of her shabby gown.

Marie thought as she looked at her, that the nun's garb at St. Esprit was far more attractive than this dull Puritan costume; she supposed that this ugly old woman must be her guardian.

Finding that her conductor did not speak or smile, but went on gravely with her scrutiny, the girl smiled timidly.

"I hope I find you well, cousin. You are Cousin Bobineau, are you not?" she said.

"Yes, child; I am always well," was the brisk answer. "Did you find your way easily?" and raising herself on tiptoe, Madame Bobineau tried to kiss Marie's forehead.

The girl's constraint vanished; she bent

down, hugged the old woman in her strong young arms, and kissed her lovingly on both cheeks.

Madame Bobineau gave a little gasp when released, and looked yet more attentively at her visitor.

"You look much older than I expected," she said, in a cold voice. "How old are you?"

"I am just eighteen."

"Can it be true? Berthold's child eighteen! How time runs on!"

"You knew my father, cousin, did you not?"

"Yes, I——" Madame Bobineau checked herself. "Sit down, child, and listen to me. I do not mean unkindly, Marie, but it is better to begin as we are to go on. You can call me Madame, or Madame Bobineau. I dare say the sisters told you that you were coming here to help me in my shop." Marie bent her head.

"Well, then, you are to be my assistant, not my relative, remember—it sounds better in business."

She gave an uneasy smile, and the girl thought she looked less friendly.

"I am afraid you will find me very ignorant," Marie said, timidly. "I can embroider and do plain sewing, but I cannot do much else; but I will try to be useful, madame," she added, earnestly.

"Yes, yes, of course," said the old woman. "Are you hungry? Come this way, and eat something."

They went again into the dark passage, then down some steps and across a bit of yard to a kitchen. Here the cloth was laid for two on a round table; a hideous old woman, with a throat that Marie could not bear to look at, took the cover off a little soup tureen and also from a dish of veal and macaroni.

“Madame will find the tart on the shelf,” the hideous creature said, and she went away.

Marie was very hungry after her journey, she also felt forlorn; Madame Bobineau took a little soup, and she ate a few mouthfuls of the ragout; then she stopped and watched her visitor eat, and her face grew longer and her eyes hard and eager.

“Ciel! she eats like a wolf. Will this happen every day?” she said to herself. Then, after a pause of silent watching, “It shall not, I shall not set so much before her; young animals never know when they have had enough. Already she has eaten a plateful of soup and two helps of meat. It is too much, she will have indigestion. Her services will hardly be worth her food till she has been some time with me; she is sure to make mistakes with the customers. She looks

strong-willed; strong-willed and a large appetite! Ah! she must not be allowed to get her head. Poor Bobineau used to say, 'Keep young girls under, and they will never know that they have wills or fancies.' He always said luxury was bad for the young. Ah! he was wise."

In old Bobineau's lifetime his wife had called him a tyrant and had groaned under his miserly despotism; but ever since he had freed her by his death she had quoted his opinions, and tried to act them out, utterly unmindful of her own suffering under his suspicion and niggard ways. This was the first time that she had been able to put herself entirely in Bobineau's place. She had had assistants, but these had been girls with homes of their own; they had come in the morning and had gone away at night, and they had brought their dinners with them. The old woman

who cleaned the house only came for half a day, and was quite independent of Madame Bobineau.

As she sat blinking her narrow eyes at the fresh young creature who had brought a touch of summer into the sunless room, Madame Bobineau groaned.

"I have been over-generous to have her here," she thought. "I believed from what those sisters wrote of the girl that they were willing to have kept her, fed her, and clothed her as long as she chose to stay. Yes, I have made a mistake. Well, as I have been a fool once, I must be as wise as I can to make up for it." She took a small tin box from her pocket, and from it a huge pinch of snuff.

Just at this point Marie left off eating and helped herself to a draught of water from the carafe on the table.

"You do not seem hungry, cousin," she



said. "You make me ashamed to eat so much ; but I was so very hungry !"

Madame Bobineau smiled grimly. "There is a tart." She looked at the shelf behind the door. She hoped Marie would refuse this luxury ; at any rate she would not tempt her through her eyes by setting it before her.

"Thank you." Marie rose up to get the tart. "You are very kind," she said as she placed it on the table.

She could easily have finished the small dish of meat, and this slice of flat plum tart did not look satisfying. She cut it in two, and offered a portion to Madame Bobineau.

Her cousin shook her head, and pressed her lips closely together. "I have dined ; soup and meat make a dinner fit for a countess," she said coldly, and she folded her shrivelled hands in patient resignation

at such a consumption of food and at the time that was being consumed over such a worthless employment as eating.

"The tart is excellent," said Marie, "I never had such a nice one." She was accustomed to liberal fare, and she helped herself to the remainder.

Madame Bobineau chafed inwardly, but she had learned to control any show of feeling.

"When you have quite finished," she said, with an emphasis that made Marie redden as she swallowed the last mouthful of pastry, "I will tell you what your duties are."

Marie jumped up briskly. "Shall I clear this away first, madame?"

"By no means—leave it. I wish you to understand that you come into this kitchen only three times a day, for your meals; you have no other business here. You will spend the rest of the day in the shop or in my parlour."

“Where am I to sleep, madame?” the girl said.

Her dinner had given her courage, she felt less forlorn, and her cheerful tone irritated Madame Bobineau; she could not understand the fearlessness begot by a long course of sympathetic treatment.

“I will show you, later,” she said. “There is no room for you here; my rooms are let to lodgers. I have taken a room for you close by. Now come.”

She led the way back to her parlour, and telling Marie to leave her hat there, she went into the shop, and drew back the bolt on the street door. She then called Marie in and began to teach the girl her duties. She showed her the places of the gloves in their boxes below and behind the counter, told her how to find the sizes and the prices, and also gave her

instructions relating to the embroideries and the other articles she had for sale.

Marie listened attentively. So far, her work seemed to her easy enough, and she began to think it would be amusing to see so many different people in the course of a day, for Madame Bobineau told her that sometimes she had as many as six customers at once in her shop.

Presently the old woman took Marie's hand and held it in her skinny fingers.

"Yes"—she looked carefully at the plump hand—"it is not a bad hand; it will do; though sunburned, it has not done rough work, I see. So much the better. To begin with, I will show you how to put on your gloves."

Marie grew rosy to the wavy curls on her forehead:

"I have not any gloves," she said, in

a mortified voice ; “ we never wore them at the convent.”

“That does not matter,” Madame Bobineau said coldly. “What you have to learn is how to fit them on the hands of my customers.”

She gave another look at Marie’s hand, then reaching a box down from one of the shelves, she took out a dull pair of slate-coloured gloves, spotted in two or three places with mildew :

“These will do,” she said. “Now observe how I fit you.”

Marie stood wondering and smiling while the glove was being fitted. It seemed to her that Madame Bobineau was wasting so much time and trouble, and when she took from the counter a pretty little steel hook, and buttoned every one of the four button-holes, Marie wondered still more, while her round, firm wrist ached at the squeezing to which it was subjected.

“There”—Madame Bobineau smiled with satisfaction—“if it had been made for your hand, that glove could not have fitted better. Yes, yes”—she put her head on one side, nearly closing her narrow eyes—“I know by looking, but you must be content to measure until your eye has got practised. Now, watch me carefully while I measure—so”—she took the fellow-glove from the counter and measured it across Marie’s knuckles—“and so,” as she tried it from the thumb-tip to the point of the forefinger. “Let me see you do that,” she said gravely.

Marie began to laugh; she thought such child’s play as this could not have an earnest meaning, but she measured the glove very exactly, and, as Madame Bobineau saw, with a simple grace of manner that was very attractive.

“There is nothing to laugh about.”

The old woman gave a dry cough. "In business you must smile and look pleasant, but you must never laugh at a customer: laughing would be quite out of place; it might give grave offence. I think I have told you all that is necessary. You have only to select, measure, and then try on the gloves; if they seem a little small, here are stretchers and here is powder." She stopped and illustrated her meaning with the help of one of the spotted gloves. "You are to do exactly as you have seen me do—exactly," she added severely, "let the customers be whom they will; and above all, make no mistake in the price."

"I am to do to strangers all those things?" Marie asked slowly, with a surprised stare; and then the absurdity overcame her shyness, and she laughed out again merrily.

“Chut! be quiet,” said Madame Bobineau. “I tell you I cannot allow you to laugh in the shop. See now. The best way is for you to begin at once: go behind the counter and fit me on this glove, or take off the one on your hand; it will go on mine easier.”

Marie obeyed in silence; but she found that glove-fitting was not so easy as it looked; the colour flew into her face, and she panted a good deal before she succeeded in drawing the glove over Madame’s bony knuckles.

She was too rough here, or too gentle there, and the old woman said: “You must begin all over again.”

The third attempt was pronounced better, and Marie hoped that her probation was over, and that she should be allowed to get cool again.

“Enough, enough, that will do now, here



comes a customer," said Madame Bobineau; and she seated herself behind the opposite counter.

The shop door opened slowly, and in came a tall, gray-haired woman, with a long, inquisitive nose, and lips that showed her gums when she smiled. She was so simply dressed that Marie thought she could not possibly care about the fit of her gloves.

"Good-day, neighbour," she said; and then she looked at Marie; "I came to tell you that there is a sale of needle-work at Thun next week; you might pick up bargains there." As she spoke she went close up to Madame Bobineau. "You have got a new assistant, have you not?" she said, in a low voice.

Madame Bobineau shook her head. "I have no money to buy bargains with, Madame Riesen. I have to feed and

clothe the fatherless." She turned up her eyes, and drew down the corners of her mouth. "Yes," she went on, so that Marie could hear, "that child is the orphan daughter of my cousin Berthold Peyrolles, and I am the only relative she has in the world."

"And she has come to help you," said Madame Riesen. "Ah! I like to hear that. It will be pleasant for you to have something young about you;" and Madame Riesen giggled, and put up her hand as if she thought the movement would prevent Marie from hearing. "She is attractive, too, mon Dieu! I should think so. She will be a good show card—ha! ha! neighbour." And taking away her hand, she giggled unrestrainedly.

Madame Bobineau looked stolid.

"Come in and tell me about these bargains," she said; and she led the way

into her den. Then when the door was shut, and she had tucked up the curtain over the little glass window that looked into the shop, so that she might keep an eye on Marie, she turned a wrathful face on her visitor. "For the love of Heaven, neighbour," she said, in a low voice, "be more careful. Is it not enough that the child has a taking face and taking ways, but you must needs come and put into her head what will, I fear, be a burden to me? When I first saw her face I was minded to send her back at once to her convent; and then"—she turned up her eyes again—"I felt that I had promised to be as a mother to the orphan, and that I could not go back from my word."

"Why should you, my friend?" Madame Riesen patted her on the shoulder, but her mischievous smile showed her gums almost to the last tooth in her head. "She is

pleasant-looking and attractive, but she is not beautiful—not, for instance, like our widow at the Beauregard—and nothing can happen in the shop without your knowledge.” She gave a sly look at the tucked-up curtain. “You have only to keep her out of the way of your lodgers—ah! by the way, that may be less easy.”

Madame Bobineau looked yellower than ever. She always ranked her chattering townswoman a fool, and to be instructed by her was intolerable; at the same time the glover prided herself on giving offence to no one. She pressed her colourless lips still closer, and bent her head with a reassuring smile.

“There is no fear on that score. I have no room to give Marie in this house. Captain Loigerot has both rooms on the first floor. Monsieur Engemann has the second floor front; the room behind

that is not furnished, and one of the upper rooms I let to a student."

"But you have a floor above that?"  
Madame Riesen looked inquisitive.

"That is not mine; it belongs, with the grenier over it, to my landlord. My staircase only goes to the third storey."

Madame Riesen clapped her hands.

"Well, to be sure!"—she gave a sigh of relief. "How often have I wondered and asked Riesen to tell me what you could possibly do with so large a house! and I knew that you had only three lodgers."

"How kind you are!" Madame Bobineau's smile was very grim. "I did not flatter myself you thought so much about me. Well, you know now, and you see that I have not a room for Marie, even if it were fitting to introduce a girl into a house occupied by single men. I have taken a lodging for her."

“Where is that?” said Madame Riesen.

“Not far off.” Madame Bobineau spoke carelessly. There was no occasion to let this inquisitive gossip know that she had got a miserable garret room for Marie from a poor man in a back street. She had lent this man money at a high rate of interest, and some of the loan remained unpaid; it had seemed to her a golden opportunity to place her *protégée* without the need of paying rent.

“That is thoughtful. Well, I hope all will go right, and that you will be rewarded for your generosity.” Madame Riesen felt that she could ask no more questions. “If she does encourage young men,” she said laughing, “you cannot find fault; girls will be girls. I wager that there will be a run on the ‘Red Glove’ when it becomes known that there is a very pretty girl behind the

counter. I congratulate you, neighbour ; but you'll have to keep a sharp eye on the shop. Why"—she gave a start as she looked at the clock on a little marble shelf on one side of the room—"mon Dieu ! how late it is ! I must say good-day—but perhaps your clock is fast"—she shook hands—"I have heard Lorenz say that you do not employ him to look after it, you regulate it yourself."

"It keeps the time of the big clock on the tower," said Madame Bobineau—her face still wore the same mask of indifference—"and I believe Madame Carouge's clocks keep that too."

Madame Riesen was on her way to the door ; she stopped and turned round.

"Ah ! that beautiful Madame Carouge, is it not wonderful to see her taste ? Before she came to the place, I have

heard Lorenz say the hotel was a desert; and now when you go in there are flowers, tropical plants, a fountain—ah! one might fancy one's self in Paris."

"Your husband is very fond of Paris, I believe; it reminds him of it, no doubt," said the old woman dryly.

Madame Riesen was quick at making discoveries, but she was not sensitive.

"It gives me pleasure," she said, "even to look at that beautiful woman; and only think, we are going to have her all to ourselves on Sunday."

"What is going to happen on Sunday?" said Madame Bobineau, taking a pinch of snuff.

"We have asked Madame Carouge to go with us to Thun. Lorenz says we shall spend the afternoon on the lake. It will be heavenly. Lorenz has asked some one else—Monsieur Engemann, I fancy."



“Ah——?”

A checked inquiry shone for an instant in the narrow eyes of Madame Bobineau.

“Yes”—her visitor gave her irritating little giggle—“are they not a handsome pair? Made for one another, I say; but Lorenz thinks Monsieur Rudolf too young for her; he says our beautiful widow might do better. He is as poor as a rat—a bank clerk, you know.”

“Your husband wishes, perhaps, that madame should keep as she is.”

This time Madame Riesen did wince a little at the dry voice of her neighbour. She nodded and went out.

The old woman glanced like a spider through her spy-hole; then she smoothed her apron with her withered hands.

“Chattering fool,” she said. “You came to pick up my secrets, but you leave behind more than you take away.”

Madame Bobineau took a long pinch of snuff, and nodded her head. "I had not thought it had gone so far between the widow and my lodger."

## CHAPTER III.

### AT THE HÔTEL BEAUREGARD.

“Now a widow, an’ please your Honor, always chooses a second husband as unlike the first as she can.”—STERNE.

MADAME CAROUGE had been sitting still, with an expectant look on her face, for more than half an hour. Occasionally her eyes had turned from the clock on the mantel-shelf to the large staircase. She could see this between the fronds of palms and ferns that almost hid the glass front of her little room, and gave a pleasant aspect to the inner hall of the Hôtel Beauregard.

Madame Carouge's eyes were as handsome as ever, large and dark, with drooping lashes; the broad black eyebrows might have been thought heavy on any one else—on her ripe nectarine-hued skin they were perfect; but, indeed, when one had gazed fully at Madame Carouge's faultless figure and superb face, one only thought of her eyes and of her lovely mouth, its upper lip like the crumpled leaf of a damask rose. Perhaps the admiration she invariably created could hardly bear to dwell on detail; one brought away from her a vision of jewel-like brilliance and velvet softness. She moved with perfect grace, but she looked perhaps a little proud; yet in a woman whose head was so divinely placed, and who walked as if the world belonged to her, one expected a little extra dignity. And then the quiet mystery in which she

had lived—for, as we know, Monsieur Carouge, till he died, had kept her in his country villa beyond the Enge—had doubtless increased the reserve that now characterised her.

Carouge had been dead more than two years, and yet the beautiful widow was little known in Berne. Though she had spent a month in Paris each winter, she did not seem to have picked up acquaintances there. She kept herself apart, and had little intercourse with her customers; they did their business with the head waiter, Moritz, the man with sunken cheeks and a hectic colour, who presided over the bureau on the right of the door as you entered.

Madame Carouge's room was farther on, on the same side, and communicated by a door with the bureau aforesaid, but it had its special entrance round the

corner, so as to face both the staircase leading to the *salle-à-manger*, up-stairs, and the inner hall, which looked very pleasant on this warm evening, with its tiny fountain screened by the surrounding foliage.

A slight frown drew the heavy eyebrows together, and Madame Carouge's beautiful bosom rose and fell with impatience. Next moment she smiled, and her smile was what Monsieur Riesen, the clock-maker in the corn market, called "adorable;" then one saw how sweet her eyes were, and how exquisite the curves of her perfect lips.

Presently she rose up and shook out the folds of her trailing black silk gown as she moved like a queen to a bird-cage hanging against the glass front of the little room.

"Chéri!" she said, and placing a bit of sugar between her full red lips, she

offered it to the little golden bird in the cage. As she bent her head you saw how round and firm was her throat in the ruff of black lace that set off its rich brown tint. You felt instinctively how warm a tide flowed beneath this golden brown skin, and just now, as a tread sounded on the stairs, it revealed itself in the flush on her cheek and the added glow in her dark eyes. The look in her eyes this evening had never been seen there in those long years of existence in the little villa beyond the Enge.

Chéri took the sugar, but his mistress's lips lingered beside the wires. Could she be trying to hide the blush which she felt on her cheeks?

Her lips parted while she listened — some one was coming down the stairs.

The steps came down as far as the mat at the foot of the stairs. In the pause that

followed, her heart throbbed so strongly that instinctively, and as it were to calm it, she put one hand on her bosom—not a small hand, but one proportioned to her tall, well-developed figure, with round, long, tapering fingers, a lovely dimple at the root of each. As the fellow-hand hung down beside her, it showed a rosy-cushioned palm that would have gladdened the eyes of a hand-reader. This hand contracted nervously as the steps moved on, not down the passage to the street, but leftward to her room. And now she could see between the palm leaves the tall figure of Monsieur Rudolf Engemann. In another moment he was at her door, which stood open; but he did not come in.

“Good evening, madame,” he said.  
“What delightful weather, is it not?”

The smile of Madame Carouge was



beautiful at that moment. She looked radiant with happiness; and as she fixed her eyes on the young man, he thought he had never seen so handsome and attractive a woman.

“Will you not come in?” she said.

The tall, broad-shouldered young Swiss bent his fair head, and came into the pretty little room.

He was evidently not a stranger there, for he walked up at once to the bird-cage hanging among some ferns and flowers.

“How are you to-day, my friend Chéri, eh?” he said.

The bird put his head on one side and looked inquisitively out of his sharp black eyes at the friendly blue ones bent on him.

“Aha, my friend,” said Monsieur Rudolf, “I often hear you as I go up-stairs; you let us all know that you can sing.”

All this while madame's eyes had been fixed on him, and now as he suddenly looked up, she did not turn away.

"Can you really hear him?" she smiled up at her tall visitor. "I have to give you a message, monsieur," she said.

He bent his head; he wondered, while he listened to her pleasant voice, mellow as her complexion, if any woman ever stood so gracefully before. Her exquisite figure, spite of its rich womanly development, was full of the long curving lines that so rejoice an artist. But then everything was harmonious with Madame Carouge, from the soft grace of her movements to the downward sweep of her long eyelashes, as she began to speak.

"Monsieur Riesen, our good neighbour—I think you know Monsieur Riesen" (the young Swiss nodded)—"has asked me to go with him and his wife to spend

a Sunday at Thun. We are, I believe, to spend most of our time on the lake. He says the boat will hold four. Will you condescend to be of the party?"

She raised her eyes, and as she met Monsieur Rudolf's admiring gaze, she blushed ever so little.

"Thank you so very much, madame!" he said impulsively. "I know I owe this invitation to your kindness."

Madame Carouge looked unmoved. "Ah, no, monsieur," she smiled; "I deserve no more thanks than the postman who brings you a letter. I have only given you a message from Monsieur Riesen. He will be so pleased if I may say that you accept for next Sunday."

"I have much pleasure in accepting such a kind offer," he said; and then he saw Moritz, the waiter, at the door, and there seemed no excuse for lingering.

“Au revoir, madame.” He bowed, and was going.

“You can come to me presently,” Madame Carouge said to Moritz. Then to Engemann: “We have not fixed any time, monsieur; that, I believe, Monsieur Riesen will decide. I think, however, we are to start soon after noon, but whenever we go, Monsieur and Madame Riesen are to breakfast with me, and if you will do me that honour——”

She paused; her timid, uncertain manner made a curious contrast with her attitude, full of dignity and repose.

Engemann bowed low. “You are very kind,” he said. “It will give me much pleasure to join you at breakfast. I suppose Thun is an old story to you.”

“I have been there”—she looked grave—“but I have not been on the lake. I have never in my life had that pleasure.”

It seemed to Monsieur Engemann, as he watched her animated face, that something very like a tear glistened in her eyes.

"Your presence," he said, in a low voice, "will give the day a charm it could not otherwise possess." A sudden kindling in her eyes made him remember that Moritz was waiting to see his mistress. "But I must not detain you," he said.

The change in his tone seemed to rouse Madame Carouge out of a dream. She had leaned forward a little, while her eyes and her slightly parted lips had been drinking in the expression that had gone with his words. Now she stood erect, and her bow, as she said "Good evening," might have been addressed to any ordinary visitor.

Monsieur Engemann went past the bower of leaves that circled the fountain, and then along the passage that led to the

entrance. Here he saw Moritz, the waiter, standing with his head bent on one side, listening with deep attention and hardly concealed amusement; the short, burly figure of Captain Loigerot stood on the mat, talking to him with much emphasis and gesture.

“You must really look to it, Moritz,” the captain was saying. “When I wish to give a friend a bottle of Liebfraumilch, I mean to have it; it will not do to give me Diedesheimer, [and to charge me twice its value.”

“Moritz,” said Monsieur Engemann, “Madame Carouge is waiting for you.”

The waiter bowed his thanks to the right, and his excuses to the left.

“Pardon me, monsieur,” he said; “I am very sorry, I do not know how it can have happened,—it shall be seen to;” and he hurried back to the glass-fronted parlour.

Captain Loigerot's voice had been decided, and his gesture earnest ; but when Engemann looked at his fleshy, high-coloured face he saw a smile on it of the most placid kind. This expression broadened into actual pleasure at the sight of Rudolf Engemann.

"The very man I wanted to see. Let us walk home together," he said, "if you are going that way ; if not, I will go yours."

"I am going home," Rudolf said, but he did not seem delighted at the prospect of a companion. Just then he wanted solitude, he wanted to think only of Madame Carouge's eyes, and of all that they had been telling him.

All ! As he walked on in silence by the side of his short, round-faced companion, who rolled along the street like a plaster mandarin, Rudolf Engemann began to feel that there was something he did not

understand in the glances of the beautiful widow—beautiful was a poor word for her seductive charm. Did she look at others in the same way? . . . It was wonderful that such a woman could care for his friendship. . . . He felt unusual impatience to see her again. It seemed to him that he had not thanked her nearly enough for her goodness—well, he would mend that fault to-morrow.

“Eh, don’t you think so, my friend?” the captain was saying.

“I beg your pardon.”

Engemann looked round; he felt as if he had waked up from a glowing dream. On each side of the street were tall houses, arcaded along the lower storeys, and he and the captain were just passing the quaint Clock Tower, which, with its pointed red-tiled cap and little magical figures, seemed like an old necromancer



presiding over the destiny of the city. Eight o'clock was just going to strike, and a group of people stood open-mouthed, watching to see the little bears come out, and the toy Duke of Zahringen strike the hour.

The ex-captain's eyes twinkled with mischief.

"I was saying how handsome our hostess is. You are a lucky young fellow, Engemann, if I may say so."

Rudolf laughed uneasily.

"You can say what you please, my good friend. Madame Carouge is not an acquaintance of yesterday. I have been boarding at the Beauregard for some months past."

Again the stout man's eyes twinkled, and he twirled his moustache as if he thought by that means to hide a smile.

"What a thing it is to be young"—he broke into a hearty laugh—"and"—

he recovered himself and looked admiringly at Rudolf—"and other things! I have been *en pension* at the Beauregard for about two years; I was a friend of our fair hostess's husband, and yet she rarely gives me a crumb of notice, or a chance of looking at her — eh — eh" — here he winked, and Rudolf felt irritable again. "I never receive a message during dinner to say that Madame wishes to see me in her bureau as soon as I have dined. Ah! you are indeed a lucky fellow."

For a minute or two Rudolf looked annoyed; then he too laughed.

"You do me much honour, captain. Madame Carouge had a message for me from Monsieur Riesen, the clock-maker. He is always telling me I want change, and he offers me a place in his boat the next time he goes to Thun—that is all."

"All! 'that is all'!" the captain laughed till he actually rolled, as he walked, from

one side of the pavement to the other ; then he took out a huge red silk handkerchief and wiped his eyes. "I ask pardon," he said. "I had thought you were—what shall I say ? too young to see your way ?—in short, that you might stand in the way of your own good fortune by not being aware of your advantages. I see I was mistaken."

He nodded with a very satisfied and significant look, and walked on in silence.

Engemann felt nettled, but he was puzzled how to answer. He could not deny his admiration for Madame Carouge, and yet, if he confessed it, there was no knowing what use the captain might make of his avowal. Perhaps he had been too shy with her, had not gone to see her as often as he might have done, and yet he did not feel he was to blame ; he shrank from being hurried into words which would pledge him to anything definite.

The two men had been walking for the last few minutes in the middle of the street, for it had grown dark under the arcades, except where a shop was brightly lighted; now they passed a gray-green fountain; upon it was the coloured figure of a knight with his lance, standing on a fluted column.

Suddenly the captain broke out with: "Engemann, near the station this morning I saw such a pretty girl; she was clearly a stranger in Berne."

"Ah," said Engemann, without interest. He had not much opinion of the captain's taste in beauty.

Loigerot had decided not to tell Engemann, or any of the Bernese young fellows who frequented the Hôtel Beauregard, of his adventure with the girl; but after what he had seen to-day, with regard to Madame Carouge and the young Swiss, he felt there

could be no risk in telling him. There were two things absolutely necessary to Captain Loigerot's happiness: he must have a companion, and if he had anything to tell, he must have a confidant.

They were now close to the Stork fountain, behind which, in the gloom cast by the arcade, hung the huge Red Glove over Madame Bobineau's shop. The Glove seemed to glower portentously in the dim light.

One of the shop windows was already cleared; the other still showed embroidered handkerchiefs, lace ties, and other *colifichets*. As the two men stopped opposite the house, the shop door opened, and a couple of women came out into the gloom. One of them—unmistakably Madame Bobineau—closed the door behind her, and the captain and his companion stared curiously at the girl left standing under the arcade. She

looked a tall, well-made young woman; her face could not be distinguished. In an instant the old glover joined her, and they passed together out of sight.

“Who the devil has old Bobineau got with her? Is she a new shop-girl?” said Loigerot. “I could make out she is young, with a good face and figure.”

Engemann laughed.

“Come, come, my friend, you are drawing on fancy. I saw a passable figure. I could make out nothing else.”

The captain gave his companion a dig in the ribs.

“That, for your making out, young man! Would you pit a civilian’s eyes against a soldier’s where a woman is concerned? I tell you that is a handsome girl, and——” He checked himself, for Engemann, surprised by his excitement, was looking at him with an amused smile. “Never mind,” said

Loigerot quickly ; “ I will ask old Bobineau all about it when she comes back.”

“ Good-night,” said the younger man.  
“ I have work to do to-night.”

He nodded, and going to the private door of the Red Glove, he let himself in.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CAPTAIN LOIGEROT INDULGES HIS CURIOSITY.

“We live in a world beset on all sides with mysteries and riddles.”—STERNE.

CAPTAIN LOIGEROT—he jealously clung to his title—lit a fresh cigar; and then he walked resolutely up and down between the corner house and the first break which came among the shops beneath the arches. Every now and then on the stone buttresses which divided one house from the other, and helped to support the arcade, a name was painted in large black letters. On the stone pier beside the glover’s shop appeared the inscription: “La Veuve



Bobineau. Gants de Paris et de Neufchâtel, Broderies, etc.;" and beneath was painted a huge red hand, nearly as large as that which hung in front of the shop.

"Gloves!" The captain looked meditatively at his thick bronzed hands. "It makes little difference to me whether the shop-girl is pretty or ugly; but still it would be refreshing to know that there was something younger in the house than the shrivelled old Bobineau and the hideous witch she employs. The girl may be a grand-daughter."

He took another turn, and reflected that last time Lenoir, the hair-dresser, had shaved him, he had said that Madame Bobineau had never had a child. Some one else had told the captain that Bobineau himself was a fiction, but Lenoir said this was not true; he and Madame Bobineau had both

come from Bâle, and he had seen Bobineau in his youth. The glover had been, as has been said, a miser, and it was to free herself from her husband's grasping relatives that Madame Bobineau had followed Lenoir's advice, when he wrote from Berne and told her of a good business for sale in the Spitalgasse.

"But I certainly heard that the old woman was wanting help in the shop," Loigerot said to himself. "She shall tell me all about it, and whether the girl came this forenoon, because"—he laid his finger on his nose—"the two facts fit. They jump to one conclusion. If it should be as I hope—*ma foi!*"

His face broadened into a beaming smile, and he rubbed his hands together with satisfaction.

It has been said that the ex-captain was forty-five. When he first came to Berne

he was charmed with his well-furnished first floor at the sign of the Red Glove, and with the way in which his meals were served at the Hôtel Beauregard, but of late he had found life a little dull. He had been a good soldier and he had liked active service ; but he had risen from the ranks, he was uncultivated, and he shrank from society. It was this awkwardness that had kept him so long a distant admirer of his beautiful hostess ; she had seemed to him a superior being. Now he began to blame himself for this reticence.

“But where would have been the use, my friend Achille ?” he said. “You are not blind, and you are susceptible ; you would only have destroyed your peace, she is beyond you : moths that fly too near a light end by singeing more than their wings ; but the light burns on and cheers some one else—not a whit the worse for the poor moth

it has shrivelled out of life. No, the widow would never have looked at me; but Engemann is another affair. If I were he, I would go in and win."

He snapped his fingers as he reached for the third time the turning down which Madame Bobineau and her *protégée* had disappeared.

"If I were a young man," he went on, "I could not shilly-shally over her as Engemann does. I have certainly not seen them together lately; but it strikes me he has only got to propose for the widow, and she will accept him. She is constantly sending him a message about something or other; and then I meet him coming out of that parlour of hers looking as pleased as if he had been made a general; if he is spoken to, he has to wake up out of a dream, as he did just now. *Ma foi*," said the honest captain, "have I not

gone through it over and over again in my time with the young sub-lieutenants? —poor young fools, how shy some of them are, as if the women are not always dying to listen to them, when they are young and handsome. Ah! if the young fellows only knew their power.”

He sighed. Presently turning sharply round he found himself face to face with his landlady.

Madame Bobineau gave an obsequious courtesy, and the captain bowed as if she were Madame Carouge herself. Though he had no advantages in the way of breeding, Monsieur Loigerot had a natural deference for women even when they were old and ugly.

“You are out late, madame,” he said.

“Yes, yes, monsieur, it is late.” She was hurrying on; but he placed himself beside her, and suited his pace to hers.

“You have had an arrival to-day, madame.”

The captain spoke boldly and pompously; shy as he was with women in general, he was not one bit afraid of old Bobineau in the gloom of the arcade.

She started with surprise, but then she remembered gossiping Madame Riesen, and she cursed her indiscretion.

“Yes, monsieur.”

“The young lady is your niece, perhaps. Ah! I congratulate you, madame, on so charming a relative. It was perhaps she whom I had the honour of directing to your house this morning when I met her outside the station?”

Madame Bobineau was taken aback, she hesitated how she should answer. She intended Marie to be considered as her shop-girl; but as she felt sure that the captain would speak of his meeting with the girl to

others, it might save trouble in some ways if she let him know that Marie belonged to her.

"Monsieur is very kind," she said deprecatingly, "but I think he mistakes. My cousin is not a young lady—only an overgrown child, fresh from her convent."

"Fresh—exactly," said the captain; "I have then had the pleasure of seeing her this morning. She is fresh and as dainty as a blossom of edelweiss. You will have to take great care of her, madame, in this town and in this bustling time of year; those tourists are insufferable sometimes in their behaviour to young and pretty women."

"Yes, yes, monsieur; I will be careful."

"You see, you have also—two young men—in the house," Loigerot went on, pausing between his words. "You must

pardon me, madame, eh!" he half closed his eyes and looked significant.

Madame Bobineau felt irritable.

"Yes, monsieur, but my cousin will only be in the shop, not in the house, and she will have plenty to do; she will not have time to think of young men."

"It is not that, madame;" he looked at her with compassion for her dulness. "It is, I mean, the young men who think of the young girls quite as much as—as—the other thing. But," he cleared his throat, "for that matter"—the captain was talking to himself as much as to Madame Bobineau—"so far as regards Monsieur Engemann (this is between ourselves, madame, you understand), I think you will soon have to seek a new inmate for your second floor."

He winked and nodded, but though Madame Bobineau could not see his face in the darkness, she was sharp enough to



understand, and she was troubled. This was the second warning about Monsieur Engemann and the landlady of the Beauregard that had fallen on her ears to-day, and the change suggested, meant to her more than the loss of a quiet, regular lodger.

Would Madame Carouge, who, in her desolate, widowed state, had shown herself so full of sympathy for other widows—would she, Bobineau asked herself, be as generous when she became a remarried woman?

The shrewd old glover guessed that a large part of the beautiful landlady's kindness to her arose from her connection with Rudolf Engemann; he often brought her a note or a message from Madame Carouge, and sometimes he was the bearer of a reply. Madame Bobineau had felt no appetite for the viands she

had set before Marie, but, for all that, she could eat greedily in private, and many a dainty dish was smuggled home when she had called, by madame's request, at the hotel, on her way from mass. Already she felt robbed in the prospect of such a marriage, and yet she was bound not to thwart it, lest Madame Carouge should find her out.

She looked stolid as she answered :  
"Monsieur Engemann has said nothing to me about leaving the Red Glove, and he would surely give me notice of his intentions if he meant to leave me."

"Ah, my good friend," the captain said gaily, "you forget the old song." He began to whistle :

"Oh, c'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour !"

"Love, you know, is apt to affect the memory."

“So!” she exclaimed. “Does Monsieur Engemann think of marrying? Is that your meaning, monsieur?”

They had reached the Red Glove, and Madame Bobineau was watching her opportunity to slip away.

But Loigerot put his hand on her arm. “You forget,” he said; “it is not so long ago that you agreed with me that Engemann and our fair widow would make a fine couple.”

“But then,” she said sweetly, “I could have said that of monsieur himself in regard to Madame Carouge.”

Loigerot reddened, and poised himself first on one foot, then on the other. He was not much accustomed to personal compliments, and the old woman’s words excited him.

“Well,” he said, “the truth is that our friend Engemann is in love with the beauty, and I fancy she favours him.”

“Mon Dieu !” Madame Bobineau folded her hands and turned up her eyes—she had a way of doing this before uttering a virtuous sentiment; the action seemed to help out her words—“can it be possible that so honourable a gentleman as Monsieur Engemann, who is as yet but a clerk in the bank, can think of offering himself to a woman of fortune; for, monsieur, by your leave, it is, I fancy, not only the beauty of Madame Carouge that makes marriage with her desirable, is it?”

This shaft told; the captain stood silent and open-mouthed, his feet wide apart, plunged in a deep reverie.

“Good-night, monsieur;” and Bobineau disappeared through her doorway.

“Great heavens!”—the captain slapped his thigh—“Achille Loigerot, you have indeed been a blind mole. An old toothless woman has discerned what has been

for so long a puzzle to you! Bobineau is right; there is the key to the mystery; Engemann is in love, but he is too proud to propose to a rich woman, and the pair will go on pining for one another. Well, I am not handsome or clever, perhaps, but"—he put his finger to his nose—"it is yet possible I may be able to help these lovers to an understanding. Ha! ha!—a hint to one or the other may smooth matters. Yes, I will manage to give a hint. I like to see people happy."

He took his cigar from his lips to enjoy a laugh, and then walked on to the point at the corner of the Spitalgasse where he had met Marie. He stood there thinking how charming the girl was. He sighed; he certainly had let her slip through his fingers; but now he knew where to find her, aha! Then, turning back, he went home and to bed.

## CHAPTER V.

### MARIE'S LODGING.

"I own my first sensations as soon as I was left solitary in my own chamber were far from being flattering."—STERNE.

MARIE groped her way up the narrow, uneven staircase of her lodging. In front of her, leading the way, was the man who had opened the door, and she knew that the woman who had stood beside him was behind her. She felt like a captive between these two dirty jailers, who, in the dim light, had looked to her like some of the beggars who came to ask alms at the gate of her convent home. She could

not see anything as she went upstairs except a glimpse of the man's dirty neck showing above a greasy brown coat, the dark walls absorbed all the light of the little hand-lamp that he carried; the smell of the oil was intolerable.

"Take care, mademoiselle, at the top," a hoarse voice said behind her; "the railing is broken away."

Marie had just reached the landing, and she saw, as the man turned to open a door, that there was nothing to prevent any one from slipping down-stairs from the narrow ledge outside the room into which he had carried his unsavoury lamp. She felt anxious to get rid of the sickening smell, and so intent was she in feeling in the basket that she carried for the candle and matches provided by Madame Bobineau, that though she saw a bare, comfortless chamber, she did not notice anything in

detail. She found the matches, and hastily struck a light.

“I will not take your lamp, thank you,” she said to the man. “Good-night.”

The door closed on her squalid hosts, and then, as the candle flickered into stronger light, Marie looked round her. The flame led her eyes to a black zigzag line above it—a crack in the wall, which a little way higher yawned into a hole. The wall was so dirty and loathsome in aspect that it seemed to the girl as if some fever or disease lurked there, and that the discoloured blisters she saw upon it were the outbreak of this.

She snatched up the candle, and looked all round. Madame Bobineau had said that she had sent bed-coverings, and Marie saw that these lay in a corner near the dingy bed. There was a rickety table against the wall, with a jug and basin,



and over it was a little cracked mirror in a tarnished frame; close to her was a wooden chair. Setting down the candle, she sank into the chair in a sudden burst of tears.

"It is cruel, it is wicked, to send me to a place like this. Oh, what shall I do?" Then pulling her skirt angrily away from the dirty floor, she sobbed out her grief and indignation. "What shall I do—oh, what shall I do?"

For the first time in her life, there was no one to whom Marie could go for comfort, and this was much worse to her than the dirt and the discomfort.

Since her mother's death she had lived in long whitewashed rooms with bare floors, and certainly the plainest of needful furnishings; she had never known luxury at the convent of St. Esprit in her surroundings or her food; but in

spite of the plainness and of the frugal fare, the cleanliness and order of the place had been dainty, and Marie had there enjoyed the greatest of luxuries—love.

The other girls brought up among these kind, simple sisters had homes to go to in holiday-time, but Marie Peyrolles had come to the convent a bright orphan child of twelve years old, and had stayed there ever since her first arrival.

Her godmother had loved Marie's mother, and had promised her, when she died, to take care of her child; but this benevolent woman was soon taken away from her charge, not, however, before she had bequeathed a sum of money to the convent to provide for her little Marie till she was sixteen years old. Then the girl was either to become a sister or to earn a living by teaching.

But Marie at sixteen was still so very

childish, and the sisters loved her so dearly, that they had no desire to give her up. In holiday-time she was their pet, she was so sweet and bright; her very sauciness gave a charming variety to the quiet, uniform life they led; but although she loved them in return, she expressed no wish to adopt their life.

At eighteen the girl became restless and dissatisfied. She did not wish to become a sister, and, indeed, not one of the gentle community sought to point out such a life for her; but she had at last begun to think, and when she saw how many claims the convent had to meet, and how in the long snowy winters, poor as the sisters were, they fed and clothed their yet poorer neighbours, she revolted against her own idle life, and one day she begged the superior to write to her father's old cousin, and ask her to find work for her to do.

“You know, mother,” she said, “I could never gain my living by teaching. Sister Josepha has given me up; she says the children will not mind me; they only laugh. But I am strong, and I can work, and I think I ought to earn my living. I need not be the burden to my cousin that I am to you and the dear sisters.”

At first the superior refused to listen to her, and Marie had to withdraw her petition; but she confided her wishes to the sisters, and little by little a feeling grew up in the convent that Marie Peyrolles wanted to leave it.

Perhaps she did. She loved her kind friends as dearly as ever, but something, a vague restlessness that as yet took no shape, began to trouble the young girl's dreams at night and her waking thoughts by day.

Often when she roused from her day-dreams she found she had been wondering what Berne was like, wondering, too, about the glover's shop in the Spitalgasse, and about the unknown cousin who sent her every New Year's day a box of sweetmeats.

And then the next time she asked to go away from the convent the superior told her that she had written to Madame Bobineau, and she was expecting a reply to her letter.

For an instant a chill fell on Marie; but there quickly followed such a thronging in of fluttering hopes and shy expectation that she felt scarcely able to eat or drink, or to fix her attention on anything. One morning, soon after, she was summoned to the superior's room to hear her fate.

This had happened so few days ago that it appeared to her like a dream.

Only, out of the excited feelings which made this episode seem so unreal, there stood out in her memory the superior's last words—a little sermon Marie had then called it, tender wisdom she now felt it to be—and her tears began to flow again as she repeated the words to herself.

“We grieve to lose you, my child, because we love you. I hope you will meet with love in your new home; but, Marie, you must try to love those with whom you have to live; it is not always easy, for love, to be perfect, demands all the powers of the soul.” Marie remembered that she had looked up questioningly at this, and the mother had added: “Yes, my child, love to God does not interfere with, though it purifies and elevates earthly love, to which it sets a pattern. As you shrink from all that would pain those you love, and strive by word,

look, and action to give happiness to others, you will be helped by love to grow careful about your faults. You must love something, Marie, and love of those we live with keeps the door of our hearts shut against the love of money and the love of self."

"It is beautiful advice," poor Marie sobbed. "It is just like them all. How could one help loving them? Ah! the very sight of them helped me to be good; but how can I love Madame Bobineau when she puts me in a place like this?" she said, with an angry shiver of disgust, as she looked at the dirty floor. "I cannot love her, and I will not," she went on; "she ought to lodge me in her own house—she is horribly unkind. The mother could not know that I was going to be lodged in a dirty garret, or she would not have sent me. I am sure of it. I have a great mind to go

back to Lucerne to-morrow. Ah! if I had not been a monster of ingratitude, I should never have left St. Esprit."

And then she cried again bitterly. It seemed to her that she was justly punished. If she had never asked to leave, the sisters would never have sent her away, and she might have worked harder for them if she had tried. It was her own fault: she had wanted to see what the outside world was like, and she had got her wish. If people in the world were all like Madame Bobineau, then indeed the convent was the happiest place to stay in.

It had grown late while she sat thinking and crying, and at last, worn out and unhappy, Marie determined to go to bed. She thought it was possible that life would look less gloomy next morning.

When she lay down it seemed impossible to believe that she had only left the con-



vent that morning. She did not go to sleep at once. All her little escapades and follies rose up before her, and in the darkness took exaggerated importance. No wonder, she said to herself, that the sisters were all glad to be rid of such a tiresome, teasing girl as she had been. How often she had plagued Sister Monica. Oh, how could she have so tormented them! Her cheeks grew hot with shame, and it began to be evident to her that only their goodness had tolerated her: in their hearts they must have been glad at her departure.

She could not sleep, her heart felt so heavy. She turned restlessly, and tried to cool her hot cheeks on the wretched pillow. The movement let light in upon her trouble. The sisters had not seemed glad to let her go; they had said they were sorry, and they always spoke the truth. Perhaps, instead of being glad, they would miss her to-

morrow. Then she let her thoughts dwell on the leave-taking : the tender kisses, the mother's pretty gift—a daintily-furnished work-basket—the kind, loving looks of all, except perhaps Sister Monica.

At last the tired child fell asleep.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A MORNING WALK.

Above me are the Alps,  
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls  
Have pinnaced in clouds their snowy scalps,  
And throned Eternity in icy halls  
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls  
The avalanche—the thunder-bolt of snow !  
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,  
Gather around these summits, as to show  
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man  
below.

*Childe Harold.*

MORNING sunshine came streaming into the dirty little room, showing more horrid cracks in the soiled wall, and also showing that the window which admitted this warm brilliance had a sufficient blind of cobwebs.

Soon the brightness travelled across Marie's coverlet, and reached the dark eyelashes which almost touched her flushed cheeks; the lashes clung together, and parted into clusters, telling tales of last night's tears.

Sleeping there, one soft cheek resting in her pink palm, Marie looked like a peaceful child; care had left no trace on her fair, soft skin. . . . The sunshine reached her eyes, and she opened them; a gaze of unrecognising wonder showed in their gray depths as she looked round her.

She started up, and then, with a grimace as her feet touched the dirty floor, she soon washed and dressed herself. She heard the clock strike five; opening her door, she heard sounds in the house that told her some one was awake. While dressing, she had decided to ask the woman of the house to clean her room, and she went down-stairs to find her.

“Come in,” a voice called out from a den under the stairs, and then the woman’s miserable face showed—a pale patch in the gloom.

Marie thought she looked much dirtier than she had looked last night. It seemed to the girl that cleanliness could not be expected from this poor creature; she would not know how to practise it. The girl stood thinking. Presently she said: “Can I have a pail and some water? You will, perhaps, show me where I can go to draw water?”

“Yes, I will show you.”

The woman brought her a pail, a cleaner one than Marie expected, and then opening the house door, she pointed out to the girl a small fountain against the high wall opposite. Marie found herself in a paved court, below the street, with this wall in front of the houses; at one end was a

very narrow passage between the walls, at the other the steep flight of steps she had come down last night.

Some girls in picturesque Bernese costumes were filling their pitchers and chatting merrily by the fountain. Marie felt amused; the fresh air revived her spirits.

The girls nodded and smiled at her and said good morning; then, as she went back slowly to the house with her full pail, they wondered who she was.

Marie was doubtful whether she should be able to clean her floor. "There is the dirt of months upon it, but there is nothing like trying," she said, laughing to herself.

At the convent she had been taught to cook and to sew and to embroider, but she had not been allowed to do housework, even when she grew too old for school lessons. There was no need, the

kind sisters had said, and it would spoil her hands for embroidery.

She felt like a child with a new toy as she tucked up her skirts and bared her white, well-shaped arms. She had only a bit of flannel to scrub with, and a sponge. It was not easy work. She had to go over the floor three times before she could clear away the dirt. Her face became very red and hot, and her loosened hair fell over her eyes, before she had finished cleaning the floor and the window.

She had used up the bit of soap bestowed on her by Madame Bobineau, and she had several times emptied and refilled her pail.

More than once she longed to give up, but she persevered, and at last all was done. Marie felt sick and exhausted, but at least her floor and her window were clean; so was the table and chair, and everything else that could be washed.

It must be owned that there was a good deal of damp in the room, but there was also a wholesome smell of soap and water; the close mustiness of the atmosphere had been banished, and the warm sun, streaming in through the open window, would, Marie hoped, soon remove the general dampness.

Then she looked ruefully at the long black cracks in the walls.

“If I could only get some paper and paste,” she said, “I would hide away those gaping cracks; I am afraid I can’t clean the walls.”

She smoothed her hair, tidied herself, and then went out.

Madame Bobineau had told her to come to the Red Glove at half-past seven. She heard seven strike—she had still time for a walk. Going up the flight of steps, she found herself on a level with the rest of the town, and she knew that if she



went straight on she should reach the big clock-tower which Madame Bobineau had pointed out last night as a landmark. She need not go yet to Madame Bobineau's, this half-hour was her own.

Marie had never gone out alone till yesterday, and even then an old priest had conveyed her as far as Olten. There was a delicious sense of freedom in this ramble in the freshness of early morning. She turned round, and went along the street built on the top of the high wall which faced her lodging. There were pretty little houses here, with flowers in every window, making a glory of scarlet and orange in the sunshine. At the end of the street she came to a sort of circular terrace with a tree in its centre; some working-men stood leaning against the parapet of this terrace. Marie looked about her to see what they were gazing at.

The platform looked down a high, steep

bank on to the blue-green river; on each side through the trees she could see the houses of Berne, and across the river the green banks again rose steeply; but the men were not gazing at the river or the houses.

Marie's eyes followed their looks upward to the horizon. She gave a little cry, and an old gray-headed workman turned and nodded at her with an approving smile.

"Aha!" he said, "you have luck; it is not often like this."

Before her in the distance was a long line of glittering light—one after another the peaks of the snow giants glistened in silver brilliance high up in the sky. No threatening clouds dimmed their grandeur; the air was bright and clear; it seemed as if silver fire burned within the range of mountains.

Marie forgot all about her miserable bedroom and her employer. She was entranced with the scene before her. Once more she felt at home again; for at St. Esprit she had called the snow mountains her friends. These were not the same, they were farther off, even more lovely, she thought, than at Lucerne. They sent a thrill through her. Ah, how she wished they did not look so far off!

“Ahem!”

A discreet cough made her turn to see who stood next her.

A hat was being raised in her honour, and a broad bronzed face was beaming with pleasure till the small eyes in it narrowed. In a minute she recognised the stout gentleman who had spoken to her yesterday in the Spitalgasse, and she smiled in answer to his greeting.

“Good morning, mademoiselle,” said

Captain Loigerot. "I need not ask if you have slept well, for you look as fresh and bright as the mountains do. I heard of your safe arrival at the Red Glove from my good friend Madame Bobineau."

"You know her?" said Marie quickly.

"I have that honour." He bowed again. "Mademoiselle, it is my good fortune to lodge in the house of Madame Bobineau. Our meeting is a singular coincidence." He held his head very stiffly, and made a pause between each sentence, as if he looked back at it, and made sure that no correction was needed. "Mademoiselle," he went on, finding that Marie's eyes were again fixed on the mountains, "is perhaps on her way to the Red Glove. May I have the honour"—he took off his hat and remained uncovered while he finished his sentence—"and the pleasure of walking so far with mademoiselle?"

There was a certain military swagger about the captain in spite of his humility, and he had taken up so much space in bowing to Marie, with his feet planted widely apart, that the working-men leaning against the parapet turned round to look, and they were now smiling at the stout, middle-aged man's admiration for the young girl, who seemed so unconscious of it.

The captain did not heed them, he only saw Marie; but the girl felt a little annoyed at the attention he had drawn on her.

"You are very kind, monsieur," she said, "but I am late, and I shall have to go much faster than perhaps you would care to go; so I had better go alone. Good morning, monsieur. I thank you very much."

She bowed and turned away, while the captain stood with his mouth open, trying to form a new sentence.

“Confound it!” was the next sentence he produced, and he stood, with his stumpy legs wider apart than ever, staring after her. “She flits away like a butterfly. Well,” he added philosophically, “it does not signify; I shall certainly see her again away from the shop; Berne is not very large and I am often in the streets, and when I determine to do a thing, usually I do it. She is prettier than I thought.” He paused, and a sudden idea made his eyes twinkle. “I believe after all I do want a pair of gloves,” he said to himself.

And this was evidently such a huge joke that he went rolling along the pavement, laughing, till his face looked like a copper full moon, with its eyes closed.

At the angle of the street, however, a big yellow dog, that had just been unfastened from a milk-cart, flew at him. The captain opened his eyes and promptly

grasped it by the collar, then he shook it and threw it from him as if it had been a puppy. He turned to the owner, a stalwart young peasant, who stood bending over his tall, flat wooden milk-pails, without an attempt to call off his dog.

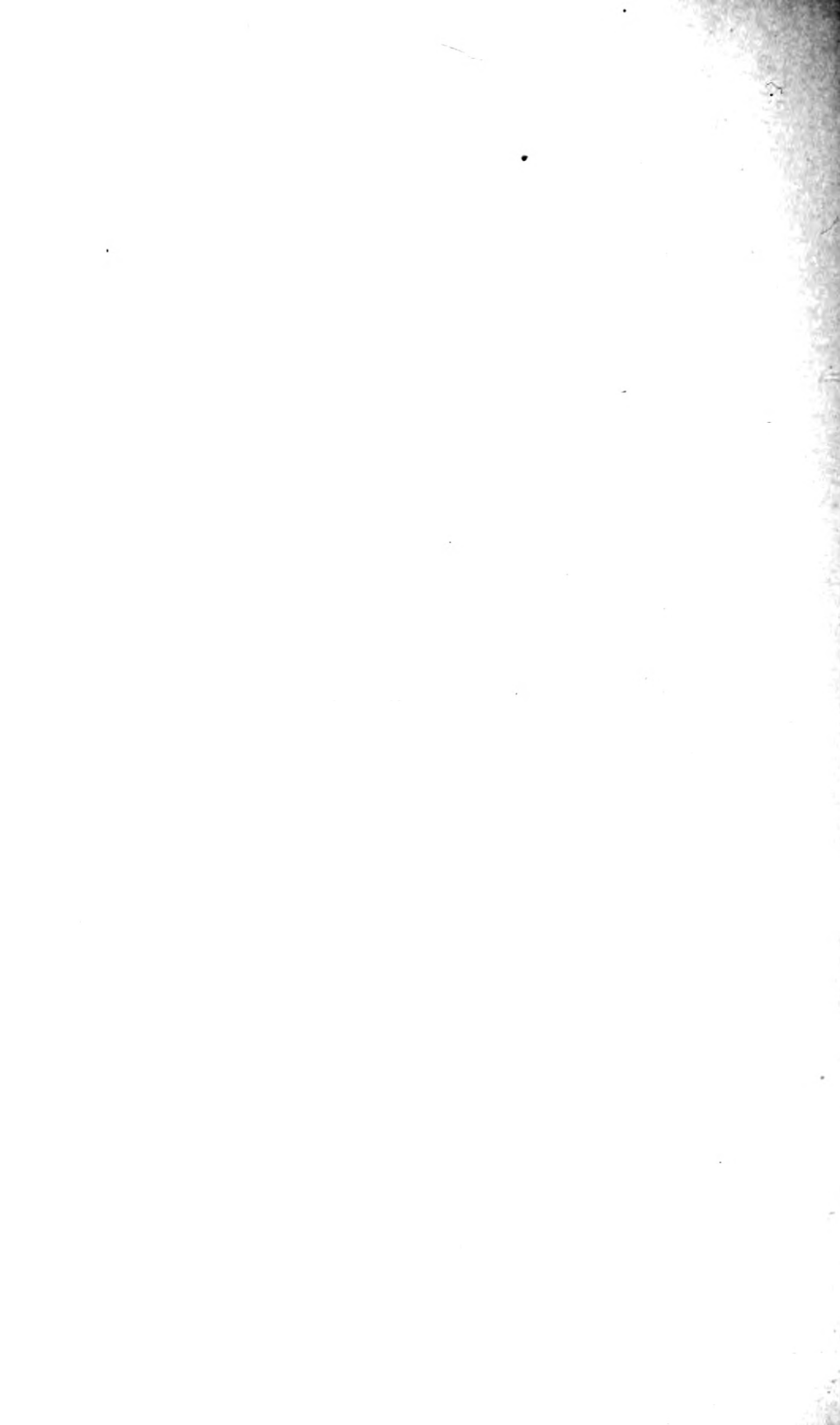
“Eh ! my friend,” said Loigerot, “how is it your dog has slipped his muzzle, or do you forget that we are in August ? Attention, my friend ; for this time I let you off.”

And then he went smiling along the street, thinking of Marie. Berne had shaken off its dulness for him ; it held within it the possibility of a very pleasant adventure.





Part II.—Madame Carouge.



## CHAPTER I.

### AT BREAKFAST.

“A man might lead such a creature as this round the world with him.”—STERNE.

RUDOLF ENGEMANN was breakfasting at the Hôtel Beauregard.

The dining-room opened from the spacious landing at the top of the first flight of stairs; the breakfast-room was on the ground-floor, on the left of the stair foot, and it faced the green inner hall where madame's palms and ferns, lighted by the lantern at the top of the well-staircase, made such a pleasant screen to her parlour, which, as has been said, was glass-fronted at the end facing the

staircase. Madame Carouge could see, if she chose, every one who came down the broad well-staircase without being seen herself; but there was no window in her room on the side which faced the double doors of the breakfast-room.

Captain Loigerot came briskly into the hotel this morning, with the intention of seeing Madame Carouge; but just as he reached the corner leading to her sanctum the folding-doors on his left were flung open by Moritz, Captain Loigerot had time, while the waiter answered some one over his shoulder, to see into the breakfast-room, and to recognise his acquaintance, Rudolf Engemann, busily engaged in eating at one of the small tables placed about the room.

This sight changed the ex-captain's intentions; the chance of a gossip was not one to be given up easily, and

although he never breakfasted till much nearer noon, he rolled into the room, and nodding to one or two dinner-table acquaintances in different parts of the room, he seated himself at Rudolf's little table.

"Good morning, my friend," he said. "I have something to tell you."

"Eh!" the young man said gaily. "Are you going to change your habits, captain, and breakfast with the rest of us?"

Loigerot shook his head, and laid his hand on the front of his tightly-buttoned coat.

"Not if I know it"—he leaned back and laughed in the deliberate manner that seemed to give him so much enjoyment. "I respect my digestion and—my figure, do you understand? Aha! you laugh, my young friend. Wait till you are forty or thereabouts, and then see what will be the result of these

cups of boiling *café au lait* that you so freely imbibe in the early morning. If I so indulged my appetite, *mon Dieu!* I should soon resemble the glass ball in the garden at the Schänzli, and I should be able to roll along the streets of Berne without making use of my legs."

He leaned back at this, and laughed so heartily that the men at the other tables joined in chorus; even the girl who gave out the coffee, who happened to be crossing the room, stopped to enjoy the captain's merriment.

Rudolf grew a little impatient of it; he wanted to get a few words with the charming widow this morning before he went to his office; but he felt obliged to wait for the captain's communication.

At last Loigerot stopped, pulled out a big red pocket-handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" he said. "Well, my

friend Engemann, what I have to say is, most haste is not always best speed. If you had staid behind last night and kept me company, you would have heard something." Monsieur Loigerot had by nature a loud voice, and his effort to lower its tone as he made this communication only served to make the other breakfasters listen for what was to come.

"Well, captain?" said the tall Swiss.

"I was right—you know what I mean." The captain leaned forward, winked, and looked important; Engemann did not answer; and he went on: "I tell you I found out I was right. The—the young person I had seen in the morning is the cousin expected by Madame Bobineau, and she is the new shop-girl. Aha! what say you now, my boy? Am I not a shrewd guesser?" He patted Rudolf's shoulder with his stumpy brown fingers. "It was

she we saw, and you pretended that she was not pretty. Mon Dieu! she is——” He nodded his head and closed his eyes. “Wait till you have seen her.”

Rudolf was amused. Glancing across the room, he saw that two of his fellow-clerks, also boarders at the hotel, were stifling their laughter, and were evidently listening to the captain’s story. Engemann looked at his moon-faced, rotund companion, and decided that his taste in beauty would not be refined or hard to satisfy.

“I forget where you saw her,” he said, “or what she was like—tall and stout, I fancy, a fine figure, eh?”

His mocking smile was, however, lost on the captain.

“Tall—yes, she is tall and upright as a pole; but she is, in a word, graceful too and well-proportioned, everything that a young woman should be. Listen, she——”



He stopped abruptly; he was about to relate his morning adventure when he became aware that Moritz, the head waiter, was standing not far off, and was probably listening.

“I congratulate you, captain. You will no longer complain of the dulness of Berne if this charming creature stays in it,” said Engemann.

Loigerot flushed up to his little eyes. He went on in a lower voice: “Did I not tell you? Of course she stays in Berne. She has come expressly to help our friend Madame Bobineau to sell her gloves. She is not to lodge in the house; madame says there is no room; but”—here the captain put his finger beside his nose and looked knowing—“but I agree with our hostess, lodgings are better for her cousin; besides, the going to and fro gives opportunities—eh, what——?”

He became so very red, and looked so suddenly discomfited, that Engemann could not help laughing, and his two fellow-clerks joined in chorus. Loigerot got up from his seat, and stuffed his hands into his pockets as he walked to the window.

"I beg your pardon, captain." Rudolf laid down his napkin and followed him; "but you don't seem to have lost time: she only arrived yesterday, and you talk of opportunities already."

"I did not say *I* had lost time," said Loigerot gravely. "I only said you had done so. I have told you all I had to tell you, young man."

He turned his back and looked out of the window; he was vexed with himself; he did not mean to have said so much, and yet he must have told some one; and Engemann was so evidently infatuated with Madame Carouge, that he was the best con-

fidant he could have chosen. The other men had laughed, but he did not think they had understood him—no, he felt sure they had not. Still, Captain Loigerot felt that his enthusiasm had carried him too far: he did not want to surround this sweet girl with a crowd of foolish admirers, and he thought the safe plan would be to let Engemann leave the breakfast-room before he did, so that his young friend might have no temptation to repeat what he had heard to the other fellows.

Loigerot stood still, therefore, at the window. There was always something going on in the street just below it, and to-day he was charmed by the sight of three buxom peasant girls, who stood gazing at the showy mock silver chains, medals, and brooches in a glass case in front of a shop across the way.

“Pretty, unwise creatures,” the captain

thought: "they are like moths round a candle, they wish to have these trinkets because they shine. Bah! they shine now, but in a few months they will be tarnished and dull, if indeed they do not show they are but brass or worse. It is the way with the young; the outside look, that is all they care for, whether it be in a husband or a bodice-chain."

Then seeing that Engemann had departed, he too went out to say a few words to Madame Carouge. The door of her room stood open, and Loigerot heard her voice. She was speaking so very earnestly that he did not like to go forward. He knew that she could see him if she looked that way, so he stood watching the trickle of the fountain, many-coloured as the sunshine fell on it, and the moving reflected light on the palm fronds near it.

“Ah, monsieur,” the rich full voice went on within the room, “you are too kind in your thanks; it is I, on the contrary, who have to thank you for the pleasant talks which brighten my monotonous life.”

Loigerot was too discreet to turn his head: he could not, therefore, see the sweet expression that filled the widow's dark eyes as she raised them to look at Rudolf Engemann.

The look thrilled through the young fellow, and seemed to draw his heart out of him. He felt perplexed and agitated as his eyes met that deep liquid glance, at once so tender and so beseeching. He had heard people say that Madame Carouge had flashing eyes, but now the fire was quenched by a subdued sweetness in harmony with the careless grace of her attitude, as she leaned back on her little

sofa; one smooth hand lay in her lap, and Rudolf found himself looking at her wedding-ring, and wondering whether she had been happy with her husband.

“Is your life monotonous, then?” he said. “I should have thought it had variety enough.”

Loigerot could not help sniggering at the change in the young man’s voice.

“Mon Dieu! he would do for a stage lover,” he thought over the palm leaves; but he did not like his position as listener, and as it was evident he had escaped notice in the preoccupation of the two within the parlour, he went softly back to the corner, and then down to the entrance door of the hotel, where he saw Moritz talking to some new arrivals.

Rudolf’s question was not answered at once: Madame Carouge sat thinking. She put up one hand and let her soft, rounded

chin nestle between an outspread thumb and finger, thereby showing exquisite curves from the round, supple wrist to the pointed little finger, and the rosy, hollowed palm. Rudolf thought how nectarine-like her cheek glowed against her dark lashes as she sat thinking, her head bent a little forward.

“You are right,” she said at last. “Men who think can always supply the right word. I meant to convey the feeling which my life gives me. Ah, yes! you are right, monsieur; there is plenty of variety in my days, and I ought not to complain. Complaint is always useless; besides, it is disagreeable to others.”

She spoke very sadly.

“Pardon me, I do not see how one can get on without complaining sometimes,” he said simply, and with a consciousness that somehow he had reproved her. “I think

people are foolish who keep all their grievances to themselves."

She looked up with a bright smile.

"And yet," she said, "you never speak of yours; and in this life no one can hope to escape them. You have troubles, I am sure."

A cough, and then a loud scraping of the throat disturbed her, and checked Rudolf's answer.

Madame Carouge rose up from the sofa, and came forward to the door. Captain Loigerot stood outside, beaming with satisfaction; he bowed as low as the construction of his figure would permit.

"I had the honour of receiving a message from you last night, madame," he said, "conveyed to me by Moritz, that you wished to see me to-day."

Madame Carouge bowed and smiled, but she felt very angry.



“Monsieur is too kind,” she said gravely; “I had not dreamed of disturbing him so early as this. I told Moritz that if you could spare me five minutes before dinner, I should be very glad; it is to ask you to be so kind as to tell Madame Bobineau to call in to-morrow as she goes home from mass. It will be a great kindness, monsieur, if you will convey her my request.”

Loigerot put his hand on his heart. “I am always at your service, madame,” he said effusively. “Morning or night, I am only too happy to execute your commands whenever you honour me with them.”

His bow was something to see.

Involuntarily Madame Carouge took a step back, as his bald crown bent itself into her view.

“Ah, monsieur, I do not know how to answer you,” she said softly, “unless I say, See what it is to be a soldier!”

Rudolf Engemann had been impatiently awaiting an opportunity of taking his leave.

"I must say good-day, madame," he said.  
"I did not know it was so late."

Madame Carouge glanced back at him with a smile.

As Rudolf passed him, Loigerot looked up and winked his right eye. "Aha! Time passes quickly when we are pleasantly engaged."

Then he rubbed his hands and chuckled so loudly that the sound followed Engemann to the entrance door, and made him hurry up the street at a much quicker pace than usual. Madame Carouge remained silent; and Loigerot suddenly remembered with confusion that she had perhaps enjoyed her *tête-à-tête* as much as Engemann had.

He became grave in an instant.

"Then madame wishes me to say to

Madame Bobineau that she is to have the pleasure of calling here to-morrow."

"I thank you, monsieur."

The widow courtesied; she drew back into her room as if to say that the interview was over. She was surprised when Loigerot followed her in. Coming up close beside her, he said, in a low voice: "Pardon me, madame. Have you heard about Madame Bobineau's cousin?"

The widow's heavy eyebrows drew nearer to one another; Monsieur Loigerot did not often venture across her threshold. Monsieur Engemann was the only male guest who came further than the doorway as a right, unless, indeed, it was Riesen the clock-maker; but then he was a neighbour, and he regulated all the clocks of the hotel.

"No, monsieur," she said stiffly; "I have not seen Madame Bobineau lately."

Loigerot was too much bent on telling

his news to care for the stiff tone in which she spoke, though at another time it might have caught his ear and checked his speech.

“Ah!”—he lowered his voice still more —“then you have something to see. A young girl arrived yesterday at the Red Glove, she”—he stopped suddenly; for as he looked up at his hostess he saw that her lower lip was full of scorn. The captain was rather obtuse in perception, but he could not fail to see that Madame Carouge had no interest whatever in the young girl he had been about to describe to her in rapturous words.

“Indeed!” she said. “Then I may count on your delivering my message. Thank you, again, monsieur, for your kindness and courtesy.”

She was too polite to seat herself at her desk, but the captain felt that he was expected to go away.

## CHAPTER II.

### HIS FAINT HEART.

“Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on’t?”—*Twelfth Night*.

RUDOLF ENGEMANN had walked on very quickly from the Beauregard till he reached the bank. As he approached the clock-maker’s shop he saw that Monsieur Riesen was standing in his doorway, ready to exchange a morning greeting, but Rudolf did not want to speak to any one and he looked another way; his thoughts were full of Madame Carouge. He had been joked about her lately by Loigerot and

some of the other regular boarders of the hotel, and these jokes at her expense had ruffled his simple, loyal nature.

Rudolf was a fine, tall young fellow, and he was twenty-four years old; but he had lived very quietly at Fribourg with his father and mother, and since he had lost them last winter he had not felt much inclination to seek out friends. As yet no woman's coquetry towards him had tarnished the reverence he felt for women. He was very grateful to Madame Carouge for her friendliness—that was the name he gave to her incessant kindness to him; it had seemed to him an impertinence that these common-minded talkers should thus freely discuss his relations with so perfect a woman.

She was to him all that a woman of her age should be, and he felt an indescribable pleasure in looking at her and listening to

her full, mellow voice. But to-day he felt troubled, there had been a change in her manner towards him.

He knew very well that Madame Carouge rarely admitted Loigerot into her sanctum ; the captain and Rudolf's fellow-clerks did all their business with Moritz at the bureau on the right of the entrance ; unless, indeed, as had happened to Loigerot this morning, Madame Carouge had sent a special message to request his presence in her own room.

"Loigerot does far more for the Beau-regard than I do," Engemann thought. "He drinks plenty of wine, which I cannot afford to do, he deserves more of her than I do ; her friendship for me is simple kindness. She has a good heart."

He had often gone through this formula during the last two months, but to-day, and indeed once or twice before, it

had not satisfied him ; her manner, even her looks to-day had changed ; something beyond her usual kindness puzzled him now. Madame Carouge had become so grave and quiet ; her manner was perhaps kinder than ever, but she seemed less at her ease. When he recalled her sweet downcast confusion, and then the melting glance he had met in those beautiful eyes of hers just now, an odd sensation that was chiefly pleasure, but which had yet a thread of perplexity interwoven with it, kept him absorbed, even after he had reached the bank and was seated before his desk. As he went in he had met one of his fellow-clerks who dined daily at the Hôtel Beau-regard.

“I congratulate you, Engemann,” he said. “Have you got the widow to fix a day for the wedding ?”

Rudolf merely raised his shoulders and



passed in, but the words went with him. When he began to write, it seemed as if he saw on the paper the dark glowing face of Madame Carouge.

All at once an answer came to the puzzle; a warm feeling of pleasure filled his veins; life seemed to open before him a broad, smooth path golden with sunshine. Rudolf asked himself why because he was poor he should not grasp this pleasant portion which almost, he believed, might be his for the asking. It seemed foolish, unmanly, even to hesitate. The doubt and self-rebuke which had so often checked him kept silence now while he asked himself whether the change he had noted in Madame Carouge was not meant to encourage his hopes.

The young fellow was too simple to believe in the extent of the widow's love for him. He told himself that his admiration had not displeased her, and that she had

attributed his slowness and coldness to the real cause—his want of means. In her generosity she had tried to take away this barrier in his path, to show him that he was not to be hindered by it. Still apart from this he did not like the disparity between them. She was some years older, but her perfect beauty would make up for that; his independent nature still revolted from the notion of a wife so much richer than he was. When the jokers had begun their raillery, he had not considered the matter seriously, or he would have shrunk from the idea of marrying a widow. Living with his parents, who had told him they had in their youth married for love, he had grown up with old-fashioned ideas, one of which was a fancy that he would like to be the first and the sole possessor of his wife's affections, supposing that he ever took a wife. He had lived so much alone that he

had had more time for reflection than most young fellows have, and as he was by nature silent and reticent, he often dreamed about the future, while his companions enjoyed the present.

His dream to-day was very distracting. He found himself sitting idle before his desk ; but as idleness was not one of his characteristics he roused himself, and compelled his attention to fix on the business of the day. When this was over, he lingered at his desk till the other clerks departed, and then he started for a walk. He often went down to the platform in front of the Cathedral to look at the grand view of the blue-green Aar foaming over its weir, with the far-off background of snow mountains ; but on this platform on Saturday afternoon there was a certain risk of meeting acquaintances ; among them the stout ex-captain was sure to be found,

chatting with the nursemaids who brought their charges to play on the grass; and Rudolf especially wished to keep clear of Loigerot till dinner-time. He, therefore, found his way to the river-side, some way from the Münster platform, and then he walked out towards the country southwards.

He was impatient to see Madame Carouge again, and yet he shrank from their next meeting. His pleasant visions of a love-marriage with a simple girl came back, and he asked himself whether he was sure that this beautiful fascinating woman was really the life-long companion he coveted.

He knew so little about her; he had had no opportunity for long conversations; just as they began to talk on something more interesting than usual, Moritz was sure to bring an interruption; it seemed as though they were perpetually checked on

the verge of becoming intimate. And the young fellow felt that this was likely to go on; and with his old-fashioned ideas, he shrank from venturing on such an important affair as marriage on mere liking. He felt, too, that his present position with the widow could not continue. Sooner or later one of these jokes so freely circulated would reach the ears of Madame Carouge, and she would feel herself compromised by his attentions.

A sudden light came to him as he walked disconsolately along the dull road. The promised day at Thun would at least be free from interruptions; he should get more talk with her; he could then judge for himself. But here his manliness cried out that he was unworthy to win a woman if he could consider her in this cold-blooded fashion, while more worldly promptings whispered him not to be unwise, not to

allow a romantic scruple to stand in the way of the prosperous future that lay before him as the husband of Madame Carouge.

When he realised her position, he winced a little; he thought he should not like his wife to sit where any strange idler might, if he chose to take the trouble, gaze through the window at her, even speak to her, and then he laughed and told himself not to be premature. One of his perplexities had, however, left him; without owning his conquest to himself in any boastful manner, he seemed to-day to have lost doubt and fear about Madame Carouge's feelings for him.

"I must leave it all till Sunday comes," he thought: "that day at Thun will be a deciding point." His mind was more at ease, and turning back by a cross-road he soon came in sight of the town-gate

flanked with the stone bears, that seem to defy intruders to enter Berne.

He looked at his watch. He was surprised to find how late it was; he had scarcely time to go to his lodgings before the *table d'hôte*.

He went rapidly along under the quaint arcades. Just as he reached the Red Glove his two fellow-clerks who frequented the Beauregard came laughing out of the shop. They saw Engemann, and blocked up the way.

"I say, Engemann, the captain has not such bad taste after all. Go into the shop and look at the girl," one of them said.

"She is too pale and slender for Engemann," the other said. "Don't you make any mistake, he will see no beauty in her; he likes something more full-blown; he's fond of colour."

The last speaker was a mere lad, and Rudolf looked sternly at him.

“Look here, Wengern,” he said, “that’s enough; a ‘joke is well enough in limits, but a joke carried too far is very bad and offensive. I wish you good evening.”

He looked calm and determined; the clerks walked away; but when they got to a safe distance, they sniggered about the airs “the young giant” gave himself.

Till this meeting with his companions, Rudolf had forgotten the captain’s adventure. Now he looked in through the glass door of the shop and caught a glimpse of Madame Bobineau’s cousin. She stood behind the counter with her handkerchief to her eyes. He heard the old woman’s harsh voice, and glancing towards the desk, he saw that his oily-speaking landlady’s small eyes gleamed with anger. Rudolf gave another backward glance at Marie.

“Poor girl! It’s a shame,” he thought,



“that she should be made to cry. I dare say she laughed when those fellows talked to her; probably she could not help it, and the old woman is a dragon. Well, she should not have a young girl in her shop in a town like Berne.”

This was evidently not an opportune moment in which to make acquaintance with Madame Bobineau’s cousin, though Wengern’s observation had made him a little curious about her. “There is plenty of time for that,” he thought, as he opened the house door. Before he reached the staircase his landlady’s shrill voice made itself distinct.

“I tell you it must be done : a customer is a customer, and his gloves must be duly measured. Do you suppose, you vain little hussy, that a gentleman thinks who it is that measures him? He thinks of his gloves, that is all.”

Rudolf hurried upstairs, and so lost the end of the scolding.

The bell had rung for *table d'hôte* before he reached the hotel; he found every one busy eating soup, except a few late arrivals who sat tucking the corners of their table-napkins into their waistcoats up to their throats. Presently two clerks began to tease Loigerot about the pretty shop-girl at the Red Glove.

"Ah, yes, Engemann, did you see her after we left you?" said one of them.

The captain looked sharply at Rudolf as he answered. "I only got a glimpse of her through the window."

"Did I not tell you?" the young one began; but a nudge from his companion silenced him, and as Captain Loigerot at once started a fresh subject, no more was said about the Red Glove.

When dinner came at last to an end,

Rudolf took care to leave the hotel with the others. He resolved not to give fresh food to these gossips on the subject of his interviews with Madame Carouge.

## CHAPTER III.

### BOBINEAU LOSES HER SUPPER.

“There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well.”—BACON.

“In all negotiations of difficulty, a man may not look to sow and reap at once ; but must prepare business, and so ripen it by degrees.”—BACON.

MADAME BOBINEAU never failed in her attendance at early mass on Sundays and on Church festivals, and as the Hôtel Beauregard lay in her way home, she sometimes called in to see the widow. Madame Carouge was sure to be in her bureau, for it must be confessed that she had a horror of early rising, and preferred high mass to the services that preceded it.

Madame Bobineau said it feasted her eyes to get even a glimpse of the beautiful widow—certainly she managed to combine this kind of refreshment with the hope of a more material feast; and in this prospect of carrying home an excellent Sunday dinner it had become a habit with the old woman to take occasionally a small flag-basket to church. She contrived to fasten this under her ample skirt, and she only produced it when she saw that Madame Carouge had some dainties to offer her.

Sometimes a half chicken or a tempting sweetbread fell to her lot, or a dish of cutlets or stewed kidneys would be ready packed for her in a little covered tureen, and to this Madame Carouge often added a half-bottle of Macon or of Diedesheimer. Yesterday, however, a distinct message had been sent to the mistress of the Red Glove, through Captain Loigerot, that she

was to call without fail next morning at the Beauregard. But though Madame Bobineau felt her appetite quicken at the prospect of sundry possible dainties, she did not intend to share them with Marie, and she resolved to deny herself the enjoyment of them till after supper; her former shop-girls had spent their Sundays at home; but she was Marie's only friend in Berne, and the girl of necessity must dine and sup with her. It was, however, possible, she reflected as she drew near the hotel, that her liberal friend, in consideration of Marie, might bestow a double portion of good things on this especial Sunday.

Madame Bobineau smacked her thin lips with expectation as she went along. "So much the better for me, and for Marie too, if I keep all for myself," she said; "it is not well to pamper a young girl, and run the risk of upsetting her stomach. Marie cannot have been used to dainties at the convent."

With this reflection she stepped cheerfully into the entrance of the Beauregard. Moritz's pensive, consumptive-looking face showed at the door of his bureau, but when he saw Madame Bobineau, he bowed and grinned and retreated, in spite of the elaborate courtesy and smile with which she greeted him. The old glover was one of the visitors at the hotel Moritz did not like.

She went round softly to the glazed end of the widow's parlour; the door stood open; but her cat-like tread made no sound, and Madame Carouge gave a little start when she found the old woman's eyes fixed on her in intense scrutiny.

The widow was sitting on her sofa in deep thought, and she had to force a smile, for the interruption came at a wrong moment. She was trying, for about the twentieth time, to give herself a reason why Monsieur Engemann had

not lingered to speak to her after dinner yesterday. She felt chilled and disquieted. And yet he had often before gone out in this way with his friends; but then, she argued to herself, yesterday morning's interview had completely changed their relations to one another; he had never looked at her as he had looked yesterday morning. Love had shone in his eyes, and who could say but for that tiresome Captain Loigerot he might have declared his passion.

She frowned a little as this idea presented itself, and looking up found herself face to face with Madame Bobineau.

The mistress of the Red Glove looked at this moment so like an old witch that Madame Carouge shivered and turned slightly pale. She felt as if the inquisitive old woman had been reading her secret thoughts. But she spoke to her pleasantly.

“Good morning, neighbour; you are



earlier from mass than usual. How have you been lately?"

Madame Bobineau kept the widow's soft, golden-brown hand in her lean grasp, and gazed admiringly in her rich friend's handsome face.

"Much as usual, I thank you, madame. There is no need to ask how you are," she said. "You look like a newly-opened rose, with your eyes as bright as diamonds."

Madame Carouge turned away with a perceptible shrug of the shoulders; there was little variety in the old woman's compliments, and she was not in a mood for such flattery this morning.

The bead-like eyes of the old glover looked keenly round the room, but they could not spy any parcel likely to contain the dainties she longed after.

"You were so good, madame," she said humbly, "as to send me word by Captain

Loigerot—ah, what an excellent gentleman he is!—that you wished me to call in on my way from mass this morning.”

“Ah! so I did. I had forgotten; yes.” Madame Carouge spoke with studied carelessness. She saw the greedy eyes furtively searching every corner, and she enjoyed Madame Bobineau’s anxiety. “Let me see—what was it?—I remember: Captain Loigerot told me that you have adopted a young relative; that you have her in your shop.”

Madame Bobineau’s hopes sank; but then this question might bear on the extra supply of dainties she was hoping for.

“I was coming, dear madame, without your summons, to tell you about her. You are always so kind to me that I have ventured to believe you would take some interest in my little cousin.”

“Ah, then, it is a child that you have

adopted. But will you not find it a troublesome charge? You will have to send it to school, my good Madame Bobineau; you cannot keep a child in the shop."

"It is not so bad as that; she has been at school at Lucerne," the old woman answered. "It is indeed a heavy burden on me," she went on in a whining voice; "but what could I do? I could not leave my poor Berthold's child to be a burden to strangers, and I—I want help in the shop."

Madame Carouge looked grave.

"Help in your shop! How old is the child? And what is she like?"

Madame Bobineau's eyes became keener than ever.

"Oh, madame, after all she is very ordinary to look at—a girl of sixteen or thereabouts—a simple child fresh from her convent."

"In that case"—a slight frown contracted the widow's smooth forehead, and

her full, rich voice became hard and dry—  
“I do not think a glove-shop is a good beginning for her. She would be safer at a dressmaker’s, or even in a draper’s shop. In your shop she will get stared at, and perhaps be taught to flirt.”

Madame Bobineau was at once aggrieved and alarmed.

“I am also in the shop, madame, or at worst I can see all that passes through the glass door. But I assure you Marie is more inclined to prudery than to flirting. Why, only yesterday, when two of your boarders came in, the little chit actually let them choose and measure their own gloves themselves; and when I scolded her, ‘she did not care to touch men’s hands,’ she said.”

“What did you expect her to do, then?” The widow could not help smiling at Madame Bobineau’s indignation.

“Well, my dear madame, I had bid her measure the customers ; and you will, I am sure, agree with me that a girl of that age should do as she is bid, and should not take up ideas of her own.”

Madame Carouge was so amused that her pearly teeth showed plainly.

“Actually, madame,” the old woman went on, “she had the face to tell me that the gentlemen stared at her, and that she considered them impertinent.”

“Perhaps they did stare rudely,” said Madame Carouge thoughtfully. “I tell you young men will stare at shop-girls, they consider it their right. Who did did you say they were?”

“Two of your boarders, madame— young Monsieur Wengern and Monsieur Christen. I am sure they are very civil, quiet gentlemen.”

“They may have been too civil, my

good woman"—the widow's manner was still constrained—"but this young cousin of yours must be pretty: those are not young men who would care to look at a plain girl."

"Yes, madame, the girl is passable." Then remembering that Madame Carouge would probably go to the Red Glove and form her own judgment of Marie, "Captain Loigerot indeed says she is pretty;" she shrugged her shoulders, 'but——'

"Good heavens! Do you mean to say," Madame Carouge interrupted so sharply that the old woman's eyes and mouth opened simultaneously, "do you tell me that you have this young and pretty girl to live in your house, so that she makes acquaintance with your lodgers?"

Madame Bobineau cringed and trembled.

She felt almost scorched by the fire that blazed in the widow's usually soft, velvet-like eyes.

"No, no, indeed, madame. I ask a hundred pardons; but madame has altogether mistaken me. Marie does not sleep at the Red Glove—dear me, no; I could not have dreamed of anything so improper. She has a lodging in the Cour du Puits, and when she is at the Red Glove, by no chance does she go into the passage reserved for the lodgers."

"Then in what way has Monsieur Loigerot made acquaintance with her?—He is not a man to buy gloves."

The widow looked stern and unbelieving.

"Madame is right, as she always is." Bobineau spoke fawningly, and put her lean, hooked fingers on the arm of her beautiful friend. But the widow freed

herself by an impatient movement. "It is true that the captain does not buy gloves ; but on the morning of Marie's arrival he saw the girl near the station, and showed her the way to my house. The captain is a kind, fatherly man, madame. Only last night, when I was talking to him and to Monsieur Engemann—ah, is not that a beautiful young man?—the captain said I ought to—to interest you in my little cousin."

She stammered over the last words, for another scorching glance told her that her speech had given offence.

Madame Carouge's broad eyebrows knit, she raised her head proudly, and seemed to the frightened old woman to look grander and more beautiful than ever.

"Do you mean me to understand, Madame Bobineau, that at your age and with your experience, you allow yourself to talk to your gentlemen lodgers about



your shop-girl? You must excuse me if I say that your young cousin would have done well to stay in her convent; you have proved to me that she would be safer there than she is likely to be under your care."

She spoke haughtily, her words seemed to stab her listener, who almost choked with alarm—there was no hope of supper now.

"Pardon me; you mistake me, madame," she said. "It happened this way: Captain Loigerot came in last night with Monsieur Engemann, and as I happened to be in the passage, the captain asked me after the little girl he had met near the railway station."

"The captain is not young, there is not so much harm in speaking to him about the child," Madame Carouge spoke very severely; "but I am shocked that you should talk about a young girl to Monsieur Engemann——"

She stopped suddenly, as if she had

said too much. Madame Bobineau sighed with relief.

“Ah, dear madame, I did not indeed,” she spoke in her most fawning tone; “but of all the gentlemen in Berne, I consider Monsieur Engemann the safest—as safe as a married man.” Here she gave a rather cynical smile, as if her assertion amused her. “How could it be possible for a gentleman to worship you, madame, and to have eyes for any other woman! No, madame, believe me Monsieur Engemann will not even look at my little cousin.”

If Madame Carouge had been standing, she would have stamped with impatience at the old woman’s indiscretion.

“You are making a great mistake, Madame Bobineau.” She spoke with chill dignity. “You have been listening to gossip, I fear. I am not thinking about Monsieur Wengern, or Monsieur Enge-

mann, or any gentleman in particular. I am trying to show you how best to take care of your little cousin, and to keep her out of mischief. It seems to me I am a fitter counsellor in the matter than Captain Loigerot is."

"Ah, madame," the old woman rose and courtesied; she literally quivered with the fear of having lost her supper, "you are as wise as you are beautiful. Advise me, I beg of you; I will follow your advice in all things."

"Then," said Madame Carouge, smiling, "my advice is—the best thing you can do is to find a husband to take care of this young girl as soon as possible."

Madame Bobineau clasped her skinny hands, and turned up her little black eyes.

"A husband! But, dear madame, she is a little beggar, she has not a penny; and although I am willing to feed and clothe

her, I am not able to provide her with a marriage portion. Heavens! I should think not, a poor old woman like me!"

Madame Carouge gave her a smile full of scorn.

"I see you do not want advice, Madame Bobineau; your mind is made up. Good! go your own way; but when you come to me in a few months' time to complain that your little cousin is impertinent, and that her head is turned with flattery, or perhaps, even—there are plenty of bad people in Berne—that she is ruined, I shall have no pity for you—none."

She rose up, and shaking out her skirts as if she dismissed the subject and her visitor, she went slowly to her desk.

Madame Bobineau followed her and touched her arm. The old woman's lean fingers trembled; had she actually offended her best friend for the sake of a chit like Marie?

“Madame will have the goodness to pardon me. I should be an old fool to set my judgment up against hers; indeed, I did not mean to do so. If madame can find any one who—who is able to maintain a wife, and is willing to take Marie without a portion, she shall marry him. I will see to that.”

Madame Carouge smiled. “That is right. Now you show your sense. Leave it then to me; I will find your little Marie a husband. And now, my good friend, I must ask you to leave me, or I shall be late at mass.”

There was plainly to-day no forthcoming supper for Madame Bobineau, and after prolonging her leave-taking as long as she dared, she departed, smarting with vexation and disappointed greed, of which she considered Marie the primary cause.

Marriage for the little chit! How could Madame Carouge be so foolish? It would be much better to leave the girl alone. Just as she had had the trouble of teaching Marie her duties, the child was to be distracted with this notion of marriage! And the worst of it was, there was no way out of it: the beautiful widow always kept her promises.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HOPE AND FEAR.

“Methinks I feel this youth’s perfections, with an invisible and subtle stealth, to creep in at mine eyes.”  
—SHAKESPEARE.

MADAME CAROUGE stood still for some time after the old woman’s departure. She was so absorbed in thinking that she failed to hear a tap at her door—at first timid, then smartly repeated.

Madame Bobineau had left the door of the room partly open—and the widow started when she heard a familiar voice say, “May I come in?”

Madame Carouge opened the door fully.

“How do you do, Monsieur Riesen?” she said. “You have something pleasant to tell me, I am sure.”

She seated herself on the sofa, and patting it, smiled graciously at her visitor.

Monsieur Riesen took the seat indicated, making a remarkable contrast to his hostess. He was a tall, large-boned man with a sickly complexion, gray hair, and large, deep-set gray eyes. His face was so thin that his eyes had sunk back, and seemed to peer suspiciously through his dark, shaggy eyebrows, as he stooped forward to listen.

“Well, madame,” he said, “as for pleasant news I am not sure whether you will think mine so. Here is another fine Sunday, and I regret to say I am still obliged to defer our excursion to Thun; and who knows? next Sunday may bring torrents of rain with it. But it is always so, is it not?”



He looked so melancholy that she laughed.

“That Sunday always brings torrents of rain? No, my good friend, and to-day gives you contradiction. Look at the sunshine on my palms and ferns. But then is it really settled that we go next Sunday? Ah! I am glad.”

She clapped her hands, as he nodded assent, with a gaiety that scarcely harmonised with the intense expression in her eyes or with the grand lines of her figure.

Riesen was enchanted. He had not expected his news to be received so pleasantly.

“You look divine to-day, madame.” He bent his long back as he sat beside her, and spoke in an insinuating whisper. “After all, it will not matter what sort of weather we have for our excursion : we have only to look at you to feel sure that sunshine is with us.”

“Prettily said, monsieur.” She gave him a radiant smile. “But I prefer real sunshine. It is a pity we could not go to-day.”

“Yes, it is a pity,” he sighed, “but then life is full of these vexations for me”—he put his hand on his chest. “I am old, and life is now always vexing; but to you, young, rich, and beautiful, all vexation should be spared, every wish ought to be fulfilled. It is grievous to me that I should in any way cause you disappointment.”

She turned suddenly and faced him.

“Is it, then, quite impossible we can go to-day?”

“I grieve to say, Yes, dear madame. Various reasons have concurred to make it out of the question.”

This seemed to Monsieur Riesen the safest answer he could make. He felt sure that the fact of his being more than

usually dyspeptic to-day would not be accepted by Madame Carouge as a sufficient reason for his refusal.

“You must really try not to disappoint me again, monsieur,”—she pouted a little, and thereby looked more charming than ever. “But how is it that you have come to see me? I thought you were a devout Protestant, Monsieur Riesen, and were always in church at this time of day?”

“Well, yes,”—he drew a long face, and got up unwillingly—“but it is so pleasant to get a talk with you, and also I feared you might be making some other engagement for next Sunday. If we have a day like this, it will be delightful, though it is not I who shall enjoy the excursion to perfection.”

He sighed and raised his eyebrows with an envious look.

Of this Madame Carouge took no no-

tice, but she shook her head in rebuke of his words. "You ought to enjoy it thoroughly, monsieur; you will have the benefit and the pleasure of an open-air holiday in the society of your wife. I often hear her say she gets so little of your society, your business takes you much away from her. Now on Sunday it will be your business to be with her—duty and pleasure will be combined." She smiled, but there was a spice of mischief in her eyes.

Riesen made a grimace. "Duty and pleasure," he repeated, then he shook his head. "Do you enjoy things because you ought?" he said in a tender half whisper. "No, no, dear friend, believe me, true pleasure and duty were never yet mated; and yet," he gave her a look of warm admiration, "I could fancy a case where this might well happen. In mine, life is all duty, pleasure is an unknown quantity."

"Hush," Madame Carouge smiled, but she spoke imperiously, "you are talking treason, and you know it."

She looked so scornful that Riesen winced. She rose up before he had found an answer.

"You will, I know, excuse me, neighbour," she said politely; "the truth is that I am a little hurried this morning."

He got up from the sofa and she held out her hand with a winning smile that took the sting out of her previous words.

"Au revoir," she said.

"I look forward to that happiness," the clock-maker answered. And he was obliged to depart.

Madame Carouge opened the door communicating with the bureau.

"Moritz!" she called.

In an instant the thin-faced waiter appeared before her.

“If any one wants me this morning, say I am gone to church.”

“Yes, madame.”

Moritz returned to his desk with a pleased smile, and Madame Carouge went to her bedroom. But she did not get ready for church.

She placed herself before her looking-glass and stood there several minutes earnestly gazing at the reflection she saw in it.

“Yes, I must be beautiful,” she thought. “I cannot remember the time when I was not made to know it.” She turned from the glass with a look of disgust. “If they only guessed how sick I am of hearing their flattery! What do I know? It is perhaps because Rudolf has never paid me a compliment that I love him—love him. Ah! dear fellow, how I love him!”

She hid her glowing face between her hands and sat down in an easy-chair.

Presently she let her hands fall in her lap; her lip curved upward and showed her lovely teeth.

“How little one knows one’s self! How often through those long dull years I said, ‘Ah! when I get my liberty, I will never lose it again. I will be free—free as a bird—for the rest of my life!’” She laughed a little at the thought her words called up. “Poor little Chéri singing in his cage down-stairs would be wiser than I have been, if he found his cage door open. Carouge has been dead only two years, and I am already tired of my liberty. I have none left.” She struck her closed hand on the marble shelf below her mirror. “My married life was only imprisonment, bodily imprisonment—at least my heart was free, but now I do not seem to belong to myself. What a weak creature I am! I only feel really living

in Rudolf's presence—all the space between our meetings is like a dull dream that has to be got through somehow."

She sat thinking. It was such a chance that she had known him! If she had followed the suggestion of Carouge's man of business, Rudolf Engemann would still have been a stranger to her. At the time that she learned that her husband had left her all he possessed, she was advised to live for a while in retirement, and it was suggested that Moritz, the head waiter of the Hôtel Beauregard, was capable of carrying on the business for her benefit.

Even now she smiled as she remembered her answer, and the surprise it had elicited.

She had looked steadily in the face of the sleek, stolid man of business, who she knew considered her a pretty doll, for whom everything must be arranged.

"Monsieur," she said, "I am eight-and-



twenty—quite old enough to take care of myself and the Beauregard. Moritz can manage, I am sure, better under me than he could without me.”

And the lawyer had been obliged to own at the end of the first few months that the hotel was far more flourishing since the beautiful young widow had established herself there. She gave all her orders through Moritz, and the waiter was her slave. Although she had remodelled the household, and made changes in the internal arrangements which gave him much trouble, he had never murmured, but had striven to soften the ill-will shown by some of the older servants towards the new mistress.

Now as the widow sat musing she was half-ashamed of, half-amused at, the excitement which Madame Bobineau's visit had awakened in her; and, growing calm again,

she asked herself what had been the use of her studies in these past years if she could be made jealous and suspicious by a mere idea. Had she not taught herself to believe that true love could not change? If this were so, she was unreasonable to doubt Rudolf Engemann. She knew she had lived on in the hope that one day she should go out into the world and find the other half of her soul which she had dreamed of.

Captain Loigerot had some time before introduced himself to her as her husband's friend, and one day, six months ago, he had solemnly presented to her Monsieur Rudolf Engemann, a gentleman newly arrived from Fribourg, who was about to take up his residence in Berne, and who wished to become a boarder at the Hôtel Beauregard.

When she sat alone in the evening after

that short interview, Madame Carouge knew that she had seen the realisation of her dream. The conviction came to her with a certainty which left no doubt of its truth.

Since her husband's death—about two years ago—she had lived in as much seclusion as her position would allow, and yet she could not help seeing the universal admiration her beauty excited among the visitors at the Beauregard. She had not been aware that Rudolf Engemann admired her. He had looked at her attentively, but as she met his gaze, instead of thinking of herself, her thoughts had at once occupied themselves with him; indeed, he had ever since held them captive, ceaselessly filled with his image.

A strangely new life had begun for her. Instead of the haughty self-reliance she had so diligently striven to cultivate—for intercourse with her fellows had taught the

keen-witted woman that as she esteemed herself so would others esteem her—she had lately felt timidly anxious about the impression she made on this young Swiss. His manner and his attentions almost satisfied her when she was with him, but in his absence fear and harassing doubts attested the strength of her love. Every day she sought anxiously in her glass for a trace of the years which she knew made her older than Monsieur Engemann, but her love-fraught eyes only made her look more attractive; she could not see any mark of Time's fingers.

“I wrong him too much,” she thought, “by these silly doubts: if Rudolf loves me, he could not easily give me up; and if he does not love me, can I wish to keep his attentions?”

But she could not answer this question. She rose and looked once more at herself.

Her face and figure seemed to her very attractive, but if her beauty did not satisfy Rudolf, she felt that her pride in it was over; she would cast it all away if she could become that which he desired.

“Nonsense! he loves me,” she said softly to herself, the light of hope shining in the dark beauty of her eyes. “They cannot all be wrong; he does love me: see how the captain stands aloof when Rudolf is with me. Riesen and his wife and Madame Bobineau, and others also; they all think that he loves me, for they hint at it often; they cannot all deceive themselves. I am faint-hearted, that is all.”

Then she remembered that true love was rarely self-confident, and this truth might apply to Rudolf as well as to herself. In his case the knowledge that she was wealthy would, if she judged him rightly, revolt his independence and tie his tongue.

Once more she told herself blushing, that when Sunday came, she should have her longed-for opportunity, and she must try to give her lover decided encouragement; she must study his feelings instead of her own dignity.

“It is too late for mass to-day,” she said.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BEAR-PIT.

“Love is such a simple thing when we have only one-and-twenty summers and a sweet girl of seventeen trembles under our glance, as if she were a bud first opening her heart, with wondering rapture, to the morning. Such young, unfurrowed souls roll to meet each other like two velvet peaches that touch softly and are at rest.”—*Adam Bede*.

LAST Sunday had been rainy; the bright sunshine of to-day put all the holiday-makers in good-humour, and they came trooping along with gay, expectant Sunday faces. They flocked out of the tall houses on each side of the long street that stretches from one end of the town to the other till it

reaches the Nydeck Bridge; they came, too, in merry groups from the side streets and alleys, till the long street seemed filled with the wearers of straw hats and bonnets trimmed with knots and garlands of flowers. The women and girls wore chiefly sombre-coloured skirts, but many of them had the dazzling white sleeves and chemisettes and the glittering silver chains and brooches of the canton.

A buzz of talk went on among the holiday-makers; there were plenty of children in Sunday garb, and with round, festive faces, their eyes big with anticipation; they were going to the Cathedral platform to eat cakes and play on the grass. There were few men in the crowd. Most of them had lounged off in the direction of the Enge or of the bastions. A few, however, with stolid, patient faces, went on with their women and children, but these



kept on past the turning to the Münster, along the street, till they reached the bridge which unites the long promontory on which the city stands to the country beyond it. Many of these people were of the poorest class, and they were going to pay their Sunday visit to the living legend of their city, the famous bears of Berne.

Marie and Madame Bobineau were in the crowd. The old woman looked cheerful ; her feelings had been soothed soon after she reached home by the arrival of a basket from the Hôtel Beauregard. Inside it she had found so ample a repast that she had actually given Marie some cutlets for her dinner. She was looking forward to a luxurious supper when the girl went home to her lodging.

Marie was in ecstasy at all she saw ; as she walked along she thought Berne was the most beautiful place she had ever

dreamed of ; and indeed there was a succession of brilliant pictures. To-day the bright sun-glow brought every point into high relief ; the quaint fountains looked more quaint and many-coloured ; the gay stripes of the red and orange window-blinds had never seemed so vivid ; and the dazzling effects of light and shade in the arcaded streets, with the happy people, made constant pictures. The girl's eyes seemed to dance with happiness as she moved airily along beside her slow-paced old companion.

They have reached the end of the street. On the right is the bridge, and in front of them is the beautiful blue-green river shimmering in the warm sunshine. Close by is another of the gray-green fountains ; this one is guarded by an armed warrior, and Marie's delight increases. A group of merry little ones are dancing and singing hand in hand round a woman, who bends

over the fountain while she fills her buckets.

“Ah, the dear little children!” the girl cries out; “how pretty they are!”

“Have a care, there!” the woman cries. “Lieschen, Aline, and you, Wilhelm. The water will fill your shoes and spoil your Sunday clothes. Have a care, there, you little plagues!” But the little ones go on dancing.

“Ah, the dear little children, how happy they are!” says Marie. She longs to join hands with them, but Madame Bobineau will not stop; she plods slowly on to the bridge.

“Come, come along, Marie; you must never loiter in the street, child; come,” for Marie pauses again to look up the river. “You were loitering, no doubt, when Captain Loigerot spoke to you. Ah!” she sighs, “well for you that you met with so honourable a gentleman. It

is most improper for a girl to speak with a stranger." She shakes her head and frowns.

When Madame Bobineau frowns and scolds her very much, Marie is strongly tempted to go back to the Sisters; but to-day this feeling does not last; she likes the consciousness of independence; she is earning her own living while she remains with Madame Bobineau, and it seems cowardly to give up in despair because an old woman, who in other respects treats her fairly, has a trick of scolding. The sunshine and the fresh air, the moving crowd, the smiling, happy faces, the genial holiday spirit that seems to fill the air, have taken possession of the girl; her spirits rise; they are as gay as they used to be at St. Esprit; she laughs out, and looks at Madame Bobineau.

"Pardon me if I laugh, madame," she

says shyly, for she sees rebuke in her cousin's face. "I did not feel afraid of that old gentleman, the captain; he could not eat me up, as the ogre on the fountain eats the children. Do not fear; I am very strong. I would not let any one steal my purse; and if any one did steal it, he would not find much in it," the clear young voice goes on merrily. "Ah!" she cries, "this is delightful! Thank you so much for bringing me here. Oh, madame, you cannot think how happy I feel!"

She looks at Madame Bobineau with sparkling eyes. Her gaiety is infectious, and it softens the old woman a little. In a few minutes they reach the platform in front of the bear-pit, and are standing under the shade of the trees, among the chattering, merry groups who have come all this way to see the bears of Berne. Men, and women, and a crowd of little children loiter about

the stalls near the pit. These stalls are very showy, covered with toys and nick-nacks, "souvenirs de Berne" in the shape of small carved wooden tokens—bears, white, and brown, and black, and in all kinds of attitudes; boxes, and trays, and ink-stands, and Swiss châlets innumerable; albums of dried Alpine flowers, and photographs of the town and environs. Beyond are tables on which heaps of buns, and cakes, and carrots are exhibited; these are propitiatory offerings for the shaggy idols in the dens below.

Marie cannot yet see the bears; it is early, and they have not come out to greet their friends. The crowd, however, having duly inspected the stalls, and made some purchases, is now moving away from them to the bear-pit, and in a few minutes it has formed itself into a thick screen along the edge of the deep pit.

Marie is not in a hurry to see the bears; this concourse of happy people and the gay stalls glittering in the sunshine make for her a spectacle she has never before witnessed.

“Do but see, dear madame”—she pulls Madame Bobineau’s shawl to make her stop—“do but look at the toy bears. Ah, the pretty little beasts! and I thought bears were huge, ugly monsters! See, here are white bears, and here are brown ones; and oh! here are some who carry parasols, and some smoke pipes, and some—ah!”—here she laughs again—“but these are droll beyond belief; here is a bear who teaches his little scholars. See them! see the dear little beasts; there are eight, and they sit on a bench side by side, and he, the teacher, has spectacles; and oh, madame, here is another bear who paints, and his picture is the Lake of Lucerne!”

She claps her hands and cries out joyfully : " Ah, my beloved lake ! "

" Chut ! " says Madame Bobineau ; " we shall have a crowd round us, child. Heavens ! you must learn to behave yourself ; people will think you are a savage, Marie. "

But Marie leaves off laughing ; her mood is suddenly changed. Close beside her on the stall she sees some dried white flowers. Her lips part in wonder, for she recognises them ; they are edelweiss blossoms, and she knows that they must have been gathered on the heights of the snow mountains she so dearly loves.

" See, madame, " she says, but her voice is hushed and grave, " these are the lovely snow-flowers, the edelweiss. " She looks at them with reverence. " Is it not as if the snow itself had budded into blossom ? "

Madame Bobineau turns quickly away ;



she thinks the girl will follow her ; but as Marie looks up from the edelweiss to the faces of the people near her, she meets a pair of blue eyes fixed intently on her own. A tall young man is standing close beside her. Marie moves on after her cousin, but the owner of the blue eyes has taken a shorter way, and when she reaches Madame Bobineau, she finds the same pleasant-looking stranger speaking to her old cousin.

“ You did not see me just now, madame,” says Monsieur Engemann. “ Have you come to have a look at the bears ? So have I ; and this is your cousin, is it not ? ”

Marie has been gazing at him ; she thinks he is nicer than any one she has seen in Berne—he is so tall and so handsome. She feels taken by surprise, when he pulls off his hat and bows to her.

His fair hair is golden in the sunshine, and there is a happy, peaceful look on his broad

forehead and in his blue eyes, Marie thinks. Though he is so very tall, she does not feel afraid of him, he looks so kindly at her.

Madame Bobineau makes another courtesy to her lodger. "I am your humble servant, monsieur, and I thank you for your condescension. Yes, we are going to look at the bears. I wish you good-day, monsieur, we will not intrude on you."

She takes Marie's arm, and is proceeding to the further side of the bear-pit.

"Pardon me"—Engemann places himself before her—"but it is perhaps the first time that mademoiselle has seen the bears, and she cannot see them so well from that side; the people feed them there"—he looks over his shoulder. "If you will allow me, madame, I will find a place for mademoiselle here in the front. Be so kind as to follow me, mademoiselle."

He looks so kindly at Marie that she

follows him; the crowd falls away before his massive figure, and he soon finds a place for her in front beside the low wall which circles round the edge of the den.

Down below, a monstrous brown bear and a smaller black one are walking on their hind-legs round the paved circuit of the pit above which Marie stands. The bears seem much too lazy to climb the tall tree in the midst of the den, and the surface of the wall round their prison is too smooth to offer any foothold, yet Marie draws away shuddering, she thinks they look so strong and savage.

"Do not be afraid," her companion says kindly; "the bears cannot reach you here, nor can they escape from their den. Look, look, mademoiselle, that comical brown beast bows to you."

He laughs heartily, and as Marie listens to him she feels reassured. She has forgotten

Madame Bobineau for the moment ; and that old woman is in the friendly grasp of her old friend and compatriot, Monsieur Lenoir, the chief hair-dresser, and, it must be confessed, the chief retailer of gossip, in Berne.

Madame Bobineau is thankful that the crowd has made Marie invisible to them. Monsieur Engemann's fair head towers above the rest, but it is impossible to see his companion.

"This is, indeed, a pleasure," says Monsieur Lenoir, and he is polite enough to add, "the pleasanter for being unexpected, eh, my friend ?"

Lenoir puts his head on one side, and his pointed chin digs into his collar. He is a little, dapper man, with small, thin legs, and he is irresistibly like a tomtit ; his black eyebrows seem almost to encircle his eyes, and he is always in movement ; even when his restless body is still, his head is bent jerkily from side to side.

“I should have remembered,” he says, before Madame Bobineau’s answer is ready, “it is for mademoiselle your cousin’s sake you came here. Yes, yes, it is like your kindness,” and now jerks of complete satisfaction go through his restless body; the jerks have not far to go, but they denote intense enjoyment. “Now you will present me to the charming cousin. There, there”—he puts up his hand to silence Madame Bobineau’s attempt at deprecation. “She is charming, I hear; a little bird has told me so;” he touches his left ear and looks inscrutable.

Madame Bobineau is on thorns; she longs to get rid of this Argus-eyed chatterer; however, unless he sees Marie and Monsieur Engemann together he cannot tell tales; and she begins to walk slowly toward the outer fringe of the crowd, in the hope of getting rid of him.

“Where do you say the cousin is?” says Lenoir, still hungry for information.

Madame Bobineau offers a thanksgiving that he has never seen Marie. "I do not know," she says; "she is somewhere in the crowd, I suppose, or she may have gone home. She left me a while ago. You must come to the "Red Glove," and see her there."

The mistress of the "Red Glove" is at her wits' end; she knows the hair-dresser's pertinacious curiosity too well to dismiss him abruptly, and so she walks on beside him, in a tremor of fear lest Marie and Monsieur Engemann should suddenly appear together.

Marie is enjoying herself; with such a powerful-looking protector she feels that it is childish to give way to terror about the bears. It is of course true that they cannot reach her up there. She laughs at the unwieldy, awkward monster who stands with one huge paw laid beseechingly on his hairy chest, while he leers up at her out of his small red eyes. His shaggy hide is

quivering with excitement, and to all appearance he is laughing as he opens his mouth and begs. All at once Marie draws back again and shudders. She has remembered something she saw on one of the stalls, a print representing a man who has fallen into the bear-pit and is struggling for his life with these horrible monsters while they try to hug him to death. It is wicked, she thinks, to pet and play with wild beasts who only want opportunity to repeat this cruel tragedy. At this moment a woman beside her flings the brown bear a large carrot; he catches it dexterously in his mouth, and crunches it amid the loud plaudits of the spectators. A shower of carrots now falls into the den, and everybody laughs at the fawning antics of the bears. But Marie can no longer enjoy the sight; the grotesque contrast between the comic gambols of these monsters and their repulsive, savage aspect, is horrible, she thinks; she

cannot forget the tragedy of the poor Englishman.

“Mademoiselle does not care for the bears? They are favourites in Berne.” Engemann had been watching her serious face, and he had seen that she shrank back.

Marie felt ashamed. It seemed ungrateful not to be pleased with the sight which this kind gentleman had been at the trouble of showing her. She had disappointed him. She raised her eyes with a protest in them; but her new friend’s expression soothed her fears: no, he was not looking vexed. He was, on the contrary, smiling and looking satisfied with her, Marie thought, as the Superior of St. Esprit used to look; and besides this, there was something in his smile that drew her liking out to him in return; she felt trust in him, and at the same time she hoped very much she should see his frank, manly face again. Strong feelings



were new to Marie ; there had been nothing to elicit them among the gentle Sisters, who had never thwarted her, and who had by their example taught her content with her daily lot ; but this strong hope respecting her new friend came so naturally, that the girl yielded to it without distrust : it was part of the pleasure of this delightful afternoon.

“Does monsieur then consider that the bears are handsome ?” she said merrily.

“Handsome !” he said.

Engemann was so much absorbed in gazing at her, that he forgot an answer was expected of him ; and when Marie looked up and met his eyes, he smiled so pleasantly that she at once reflected his expression, and moved by a sudden impulse they both laughed. This somehow set them at ease, and, indeed, it was quite natural to laugh at such a grotesque idea as the beauty of the bears of Berne.

“No, mademoiselle,” Engemann said, “they are not handsome, they are ugly enough. Are they the first bears that mademoiselle has seen?”

“No, monsieur.” And then her sweet eyes grew pathetic, and she told him how a poor Frenchman had come to the convent leading a sick bear, which the man said had danced to earn a living for him and his wife and his little boy—she ended by telling that the bear had died in an outhouse.

She told the story so simply, that Engemann had become deeply interested, and when she came to the bear’s death and his poor master’s sorrow, her eyes were full of tears.

“It must have been very sad for him,” said Engemann.

Suddenly a cry of “Marie! Marie!” came shrilly from the back of the crowd.

Engemann, who had been transported to

the convent of St. Esprit by the tale he had heard, started; then he recognised the voice of his landlady.

“Your cousin is calling for you, *mademoiselle*,” he said, and he pushed on before Marie so as to open a passage for her.

They found Madame Bobineau fluttered and frowning, but she bestowed a smile on her lodger.

“You have been too kind and condescending, *monsieur*,” she said quickly. “I am sure the child is greatly honoured by your consideration.” Then, with a nervous look round her, “Thank *monsieur* for his goodness to you, Marie; we must be going home.”

Marie looked grave. She felt disappointed at this sudden collapse of enjoyment.

“Thank you, *monsieur*,” she said, and then she turned to Madame Bobineau; “it is early yet, *madame*, and it will not rain,”

she began. "Oh, please do not go away, madame;" and she looked up at the blue sky, over which, however, a few snowy clouds showed like fragments detached from the Blumlis Alp.

"Yes, yes, I know that. You think of the weather, my girl; I, on the contrary, think of my legs. There are no seats to be had here; the place is getting overcrowded. Come away, Marie, we will go somewhere else." But she did not frown, she courtesied to Monsieur Engemann with a smile. "Adieu, monsieur, I return you many thanks;" then she caught at Marie's arm and walked away with her.

END OF VOL. I.







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